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HOME LIFE:

JUSTIN WINSOR,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT NEEDS.

BY

JOHN F. W. WARE.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.
NEW YORK:
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1873.

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JOHN F. W. WARE,
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TENTH EDITION.

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TO THE MEMORY OF HER,

WHO HAD FAITH IN THE BOY, WHO COUNSELLED AND COMFORTED
THE MAN; WHO WAS GIVEN ME THAT I MIGHT KNOW
HOME IN ITS DAILY BEAUTY; WHOM ALONE
I KNEW AND LOVED AS

MY MOTHER.

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In giving the following pages to the public, I am not following my own desire or thought, but yielding to the request, made many times, and by those of various taste, experience, and age. I am glad to do any little good I may, conscious that the little I can do for others never can equal, certainly never can cancel, the good I have received from others. The reader will find here simply the result of observation and experience — not the vaunting of my own attainment, but rather the covert confession of short-coming — the word of one who knows better than he does. If that word shall, in any way, help any toward the home life I believe to be possible, I shall be humbly glad.

Cambridge, 26th October, 1863.

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HOME LIFE.

INTRODUCTORY.

I SHOULD be quick to accuse myself of presumption in writing about so great and grave a theme as Home — a theme which has tasked the wisdom of many — did I offer in any way my home, or myself in it, as a model. Some things seem to have said themselves to me in life, and I feel that I should utter them. For it is more true and more vital than we are apt to make it, that which Emerson says, "We exchanged our experiences and all learned something." If we have deep experiences, why not have high talk about them, even though conduct come lagging lamentably behind? To stifle these because of the imperfectness of our attainment, is not merely injustice to ourselves, but a wrong to others.

Probably no four letters in the English language have so much significance, and call out such deep and varied feeling as the four letters which spell that little word *Home!* Probably no other thing has so much to do with making the man, and shaping his destiny

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in both lives. It is the place he finds himself in when he comes into the world; it is the place he goes from when he is called out of it, and every intermediate stage, youth, manhood, age, receives from it the strongest influences and incentives. To watch lest that sacred centre receive detriment at his hand should be every man's prime duty, and his aim to leave it better than he finds it. Are there not some fundamental things which a true home must have, without which it is hardly more than a name? Is it not the want of these which is changing the character so rapidly of our home life, and threatening the vigor, possibly the life, of an institution which not only sanctioned but created of God, seems inwoven with the very fabric of life and hope, and can only be dishonored at a fearful cost to the manhood and integrity of the race? It is the high tone of our homes, the peculiar home life obtaining in them, which has made the supremacy of the New-Englander, and enabled him, child of a colder clime, and a sterile soil, to triumph over the merely adventitious advantage of other sections of the country, and become the master spirit of this continent — will it be going too far to say the master spirit of the day?

A Home is not the accidental or natural coming together of human souls under the same roof in certain definite relationships — it is not an outright gift of God, but a thing to be slowly builded upon fixed

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principles, from known laws. It cannot grow of itself. There is nothing about it to make it inevitably a success. It is a work of time and care and art, as much as a picture or a statue is. It is to begin, and grow slowly into shape and finish. It is to have the earnest and hearty coöperation of each and every member, of each in all variety and complication of membership. And this from the very outset. A young man and woman have been attracted to each other by those secret affinities which it often baffles the keenest perception to detect. The why and the wherefore of their affection they could not themselves say. They have, probably, some undefined and undefinable idea that they were created for each other. After a few months of the falsest, most unsatisfactory acquaintance and intercourse, during which each so far as the other is concerned has been acting in masque, the law binds them in one and solemnly forbids any man to sever what God has joined. This ill-prepared couple, henceforth, are to live together, their separate wills, purposes, hopes, actions, thus far free, thus far utterly unlike by nature and by education, are expected now so to blend as to make a complete, a beautiful, a perpetual harmony. The fact of marriage is to do this. Every thing has the rose-color of their own imaginations. As all has been between them, so always it will be, and you run some risk of losing their regard, or your own credit for sanity by hazarding a doubt of the con-

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tinuance of such a condition. But what is the universal testimony of experience? Let the tears of wives and the moods of husbands answer. A short time has served to wear off the lover. That is inevitable. There is a necessity for the assumption of their proper character as man and woman, as human beings. Is it possible there should be no jarring, no clashing? Has wedded love no revealings to try husband and wife, things either cunningly concealed from, or impossible to be revealed to unwedded love? Is there nothing in lives running their separate course through all these years, to stand in the way of an immediate and perfect blending? Can hearts that are wedded be at once welded, made actually into that one which the law assumes they are? The experience of the happiest and the best is against it. There is a grand season of trial, before all newly-married pairs, of which they are not enough forewarned, which takes them unawares, casts a deep shade over early married life, and sometimes makes an utter wreck of hope and love.

It ought to be understood, that between the somewhat unnatural life of lovers and the true married life, there stretches a broad intermediate ground, which all must enter and traverse on their way to that felicity which is not the dream of youth alone, but a possible attainment. Circumstances may postpone the time of entrance upon this middle ground; they may accel-

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erate or retard our passage through it, but never did man and woman come together with any purpose at all of making a united and happy life, without finding that it lay before them, — most to their amazement, many to their despair. I trace much of the mistake and misery of married life to the ignorance of this great fact — that there is inevitably a season during which the process of assimilation between two dissimilar spirits is going on, during which they are learning to respect each others' views, to make allowance for each others' weaknesses, to mutually accommodate and adjust mutual wishes and rights — which must be a season of more or less unhappiness and trial — the east wind and the cloud, out of which are to be born all the beauty and promise of a true life. Once pass safely through it, and all is well. It is the "narrow" of their intercourse through which they must go before they can stand firm on the "broad" solidity and confidence of love. It argues nothing against the reality of the love between two hearts, nothing against their adaptation to each other, or the future progress and harmony of their lives. Only let them know beforehand, that this is to be; only let meddling and injudicious friends stand aside as the process goes on; only let those concerned most nearly in it, work the great result out by themselves, and if they are in earnest, by God's help, they shall issue out of the shade into the light that shall grow brighter and

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brighter with every new year, and every fresh experience. The grand, enduring harmony shall come out of all this seeming discord. You cannot bring any two foreign substances into contact — not those which have the closest chemical affinity — but it takes some moment of time, to adjust themselves to each other, to throw off that which is foreign to union, and draw out the latent properties of relationship. They have to learn "the art of living together," these things which henceforth are to exist in an inseparable unity. So must these hearts which may yet exist as twin spirits through the long ages and experiences of eternity.

The fact about that condition prior to marriage, called an *engagement*, is, that it is the very worst preparation for marriage that can be conceived. The first work for married people to do, is to get acquainted. They come together really as strangers, in some respects greater strangers than in the first days of their intercourse, and they must not be surprised, nor should they be alarmed, if even the honeymoon be shaded by clouds. I remember to have heard of a bride who desired a friend to go with her on her bridal journey, as "she really was not acquainted with her husband." No bride is. No bridegroom knows his wife. That is a thing to come. The process may be long and trying. It might be prevented largely if the previous intercourse of the parties were upon a more

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rational footing. That we seem to decide cannot be. Custom, convention are against it. Only when they meet beneath the same roof do the man and woman begin to know each other. Amid all other new relations and duties they find rising and imperative this, and many an one will confess to you that the most unhappy year of their lives was the first year after marriage, the time of the process of getting acquainted, — that they then thought it was all failure and mistake, but that gradually out of it grew broad and substantial happiness, the result of acquaintance, mutual accommodation, and respect. Let it be set down as the first fact for those who go to make a home, that their first necessity will be to get acquainted.

I well remember the shock that I, as a young and inexperienced enthusiast, received from one whom I then considered cold and hard of heart, whose words of real wisdom — had I but then understood them — would have saved me many a mistake, many a useless regret. Anticipating only joy, seeing nothing of the perils before me, a friend said "*only upon conditions* is married life a life of happiness." I did not understand it then, perhaps I could not have understood it then, but I understand it now, and few things have taken a firmer hold upon my memory as my act, than those words *only upon conditions*. That I think is the great secret of the happiness of home. And I

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wish I might get it into the ear of every new husband and wife, that they are going to make a happy and successful life of it themselves in their new home — that they are going to make the lives of those that shall be intrusted to them happy and successful *only upon conditions.* God is not going to interfere with any miracle of his and make a true home life for you, but you are to make it for yourselves.

What the Home needs at its commencement and in its simpler relations, it needs all the way through and in every relationship. Its success is still conditional. Let a single member of a household forget or neglect his duties to the other members of it, and the home fails. It rests upon conditions all the way through.

There are one or two other things about home life, which seem to me so important as elements in home success, that I must speak briefly of them here.

The first is the necessity of compromise. We have had so much of that in our political history for some years, that the word even has become an offence with many, while the thing savors only of unmanly yielding of high principle, and base surrender of great trust. The word, however, is a good one, and so is the thing. The difficulty has been in its use. If you will look not only into human life, but into all organized existence, you will see that all harmonious action is the result of compromise, that there has everywhere

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to be an accommodation of forces, that life, as nature, is a system of checks and balances — compromises, — that no one element or power is allowed full, unlimited sway. That would bring old chaos back again. The order of the systems, the alternations of day and night, the fertility of the seasons, the flow of rivers, the stability of oceans, are results of equilibrium among forces, any one of which breaking away and exercising its unchecked right, would bring swift and broad destruction to all. Compromise makes our safety. Society likewise rests upon this basis, and is secure so long as it is undisturbed. When some one force rises and insists upon supremacy, then trouble and disintegration and revolt. So in the nation, so in the church, so in the lesser affairs between man and man, and so in the home. I have had men marvel at me because in the marriage ceremony I have wished that the new couple might learn the true compromises of love. They have thought there was a contradiction in such language, that it was a stepping down from the high level upon which wedded love should be assumed to stand, introducing the inexperienced to an unworthy temptation. A very little reflection should convince of the contrary. Wedded love, true home life, are impossible except as the result of compromise. The man or woman who attempts to act without it will make a miserable failure, must become either a selfish tyrant or an abject slave.

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Both of these the home has seen, from both of these the home has suffered. The house which has as its law the one imperious will of a master, the selfish whim of a mistress, cannot contain a true and happy home. The house which is ruled by any tyranny cannot be. I have known this tyranny to be in the children quite as painfully as in the parents — in the selfishness or the moodiness or the sin of one and another, which took all the light and joy out of the home, and made it so drear and sad, that the heart ached at merely thinking of it. Can you not recall weary-looking, sad-faced wives, the silent, patient endurers of a husband's uncompromising will; noble men, inwardly thorned by petty and pettish irritations and exactions of their wives? Have you not known weary and heavy-laden fathers, stooping, wrinkled, gray, — mothers with faces so mutely eloquent of the heart's troubles, going prematurely down the vale of years unsupported, and unblessed, because of one who would not yield his habit, his wilfulness, his vice, but persisted in making it the centre and law of the home? Had these learned the compromises of love, remembered and respected the rights, the position, the comfort, the happiness of others, studied to deny self, to avoid clashing, to clip away the rough edges of temper and preference, which make too great friction and jar, and endanger safety; the selfsame persons might have made a home angels would have looked upon

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with joy, and blessed as a success. A wise writer of our own day says, "In travelling along at night we catch a glimpse into cheerful-looking rooms, with lights blazing in them, and we conclude, involuntarily, how happy the inmates must be. Yet there is heaven and hell in those rooms, the same heaven and hell that we have known in others." The heaven or the hell are determined by the presence or the absence of a spirit of mutual compromise.

Where shall this compromise begin, where shall it end? What shall it include, what shall it exclude? These are questions to which only general answers can be given. They must be left mainly to each one's good sense and good conscience. I should say that one in a home might safely compromise in every thing but principle, and that where right and wrong are concerned, he should be as firm as God. But the compromising ought never to be all upon one side, as I have known it. Where any thing is yielded by the one, something should be yielded by the other. And this even in the little things, for it is the little things that sap and overthrow the dignity and the peace and the hope of home. The husband who expects the wife to give up every thing; the wife who will not yield though she sees the inevitable breach before her; the son, the daughter, the brother, the sister, who will not give way to the broad good of the whole,

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who insist on and press their several tyrannies, establish separate, and ever more and more widely diverging lines of life, and painfully illustrate that centrifugal force there is in a home that does not or will not recognize this necessity of compromise. Let it be felt that there must be *giving up* on all sides, let that giving up be guided and limited by principle, and I think we have a law of home intercourse which will prevent infinite trouble, and insure the best harmony. It is the bond of that surest unity — unity in diversity.

In saying just now that we can afford to compromise in every thing excepting principle, I felt myself nearing a very delicate and difficult question, one which has troubled many, one which has not troubled other many quite enough. What is to be done when two persons are drawn together by love, in a home, whose religious opinions are unlike, who belong to different sects, each believing heartily and honestly in the way of his own faith? Is this a legitimate matter of compromise? If so, what shall the compromise be? Where the parties really care very little about it, and religious faith is the shallow thing it too much is, and religious obligation the easily shifted garment many make it, this may be no question at all; where one is very strenuous, and the other good-naturedly indifferent, it cannot take long to decide; but where both, by education, by conviction, have decided and decidedly opposite views, where each has a faith, a mode of

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worship not only preferred but loved, in which to them is the essence of life and hope, the question becomes serious, intricate, and not easy of solution. Which is to give up, — the one? the other? or neither? Some say, — The wife should yield. The husband is the head, the wife should follow him. Some say, — Religion is a thing of more importance to a woman, therefore the husband should yield. Some say, — Neither should yield — religious conviction is as dear to the man, and as important as to the woman — each has a right to the exercise of his own preference and faith — there should be no compromise — they should go separate ways; while the parties themselves are quite apt to attempt the settling of the difficulty by a compromise, dropping the matter as a point of difference between themselves, and for their public purposes joining a church whose faith they do not accept, to continue hearers of what they do not believe, or become gradually drawn away from their own belief, not so much through conviction as through social ties and influences. I believe I am not any way wrong in saying that it is by no means uncommon, that when those of a more liberal faith become married to those of a stricter, they are apt to settle upon a third, as holding a convenient, intermediate ground, in which they hope to find, at least, peace, and that so the Episcopal church in New England has received no small increase.

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I must confess that while I recognize some necessity of compromise, I do not see how it can be made, I do not know how I could make it. I pity a young and conscientious woman to whom this comes up as one of the things to be decided in that new life to which she goes; I pity the high-toned, believing young man who finds that the woman of his choice, though she can stand with him at the altar, cannot worship in the same house, or sit at the same table. And equally I pity them when one gives in to the other, not merely because of the present sacrifice, but because it so surely must end in indifference and neglect; while yet more I pity those who with separate interests and beliefs, go their separate ways on Sunday, dissociate in that thing which of all others should be the bond of special union. Perhaps there should be compromise here. Perhaps any compromise is desirable. I cannot see where it can be, of which it should be expected, and I am glad I have not the matter to decide.

I have never forgotten what was once said to me by a wife: — "If my husband had been of a different faith from myself I would not have married him." I thought it strange then, but reflection and experience have shown me that it was preëminently just. There will be plenty to ridicule the declaration, and to doubt the genuineness of a love, the delicacy of a sentiment that could halt before a difficulty of so little moment. But the difficulty is not little. It is one

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of almost infinite magnitude, since it does not concern merely the present pleasure or comfort or faith of two individuals, but their after lives, their lives when they have come into the burden and heat, when they are passing through experiences and trials — the lives, present and future, of those who shall in God's time and providence be intrusted to them. In the many and strange experiences which inevitably lie before two wedded souls, there will be no so great need as that of sympathy upon religious subjects. Where from indifference or from conflicting faiths that cannot be, is a lack for which nothing can make amends. There will come conflicts, trials, when even the agreement to disagree will not suffice. Positive, mutual sympathy only can. Unhappy will it be, indeed, for those who, loving each other tenderly, find, at the times of the Father's chastening, and when they most need the support that comes of faith, that they are indeed separate from each other — that which sustains the one as bread from heaven, to the other only a stone.

Nor is this difference seen to be a very wall of partition in times of trial alone. The family is no sooner begun, and children become old enough to ask questions and receive the simpler rudiments of religious knowledge, than the difficulty assumes a still graver aspect. It must touch and control the home life in all its relations. Whose views of religion are to be

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considered the laws of the house? In which faith shall the child be educated? A certain necessity seems to decide that it shall be the mother's. The father has to submit, or do what he may indirectly to counteract a more frequent, and probably a more persistent influence than his own. He must cease to be directly the religious educator of his child, which no true parent can without exquisite pain. He must stand tamely by and submit to have his child trained in what he considers error, or he must risk the family harmony in his effort to counteract the lessons of his wife. Either way is bad for him, bad for the child, bad for all. Mothers are not always proof against temptation to exercise unduly a power which is thus gained over the child, while the child learns to take sides, or in the bewilderment of contradictory teachings, gets, in its growing years, to reject that wholly which has come to it so strangely recommended. I think there are few of any thought and experience who have not been witness to the sad complication of difficulties in homes arising out of this difference in religious faith in the heads, who have not seen it the one vitiating and blighting influence in homes which had every other element of happiness or success, who have not found it the single jar in lives of an otherwise beautiful symmetry and finish. It is not a trifling matter therefore. It ought to receive most serious attention. It ought to be one of the things to be

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taken into the account when persons are making up their mind to marry. If temper, if education, if similarity of taste, if position, if a hundred other things may and should come in to help the decision of a discrete person, if there are things, always recognized, which should modify and regulate the impulses of th affections, why should not religion be one of them, that which is in itself gravest of all, since it shapes and controls all life, while its influence extends beyond it? It is no narrowness, no bigotry, but rather the broadest prudence and the truest wisdom, which decree that it is not well that two firmly established, discordant faiths should meet at the beginning of a new home, and become as it were stones of offence for its corner.

To make home life thoroughly happy and united, one faith should run through it — father, mother, children, after the same way worshipping the Father. No words can describe the mischief that has been so largely done in these later days, by those who have laid themselves out, to lead away our young women from their home faith, by those who never measure themselves with men, but make it a specialty to seek this class of converts. I am not going to say that the faith of home is by any means always what it should be, but even that does not sanction the sort of intruding, whose object is the leading captive the young and inexperienced. It does not make one any better to

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know the means which have been made use of by Christian ministers to break up the happy harmony of home, oftentimes in an underhand way which does not savor so much of godliness and care for souls, as of something much lower and wholly personal. I am glad that I do not believe that God makes any such demand of me. The pleasantest thing about a home to me is, to find a thorough unity pervading it from the least interest to the greatest — the children growing in it into the faith of the parents, following them in that as in lesser things. There are such homes. I am glad that I know them. May they never be saddened by the straying away of any. May none, climbing up some other way, decoy from the fold a single lamb!

There are other things I would like to say of the home life. The theme is more than fruitful. Let this suffice. It is a thing of beauty, it is a thing of shame, as you and I shall make it. God will not make it the one, or prevent it from being the other. He ordained it, but he gave it to us to shape. That shaping is our life work. We lay the corner, we add joint to joint, we give the proportion, we set the finish. It may be a thing of beauty and of joy forever. God forgive any infidelity in us which shall prevent it from putting on its appointed glory!

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I.

HOME, THE RESIDENCE.

THE FIRST thing about a Home is the House,— a part of the Home too little considered, which yet has more to do with the character of Home than we are aware. If the prairie, the mountain, the sea-side, the environments of nature, are felt to have large influence in shaping the character, — things whose influence is external and must be superficial, — why shall not much more the house, the centre of our daily action and affection, mould and control our lives? The child receives inevitable and indelible impressions from the house in which he is brought up. We know that by our own experience, and a very little thought will show that, as men and women, our lives are still influenced very much by the house we live in. This is none the less true because we cannot always separate and analyze these influences. I cannot tell you why or how, perhaps, but I know that the house I live in shapes to a very considerable extent my character. Its situation, its convenience, its facilities for

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movement and for work, the way it faces, the shade about it, the figures on its carpets and its walls, are all unconscious educators and directors, not of my mere outward life, but of that which is deeper within. It is the influences which cannot be detected or analyzed which oftentimes exert the greatest power over us for good or for evil. It is coming to be understood by the philanthropist, that one of the surest ways of elevating the poor man is to give him appropriate house accommodation, make his home comfortable, convenient, and desirable, — a pleasant place to think of and to go to; and Mr. Lawrence leaves a legacy for the building of "model houses," — that great discovery of modern benevolence, which seems the only method in great cities of counteracting the terrible evils which spring from the filthy and crowded tenements allotted to the poor. In Queen Elizabeth's reign an act was passed forbidding cottages to be erected unless a certain quantity of land were attached to each, and calling such as failed in this respect "silly cottages." I wish that law might revive, and that epithet attach to more modern houses. The idea was to give every man a homestead, and encourage him to economy in his wages till he had secured it. Had that idea been carried out and made a fundamental principle of English law, established by our fathers here and respected by their sons, it would have proved

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of immense importance to the race, and secured homes to that large class which now knows nothing about them. A recent New York paper says, and what it says is equally applicable to other meridians: "If we look well into the causes of the increase of crime and of the growing immorality and corruption, we cannot fail to perceive that the mass of the population have not room to live comfortably, or even decently. Neither physical nor moral health can exist where people are packed into apartments too miserable and too inconvenient to afford the ordinary comforts and conveniences of life. There is nothing like *home* in such dwellings, nothing like the social and friendly intercourse, and fireside recreations and amusements, which make home happy under other circumstances. The crowding of several families into a building fit for but one, gives rise to bickerings and annoyances which destroy any thing like satisfaction in the domestic circle. Certain physical comforts and conveniences, as well as room, are absolutely necessary for the proper home education of children, and where these are wanting the morals of a community must suffer." A walk through some parts of any large town or city is enough to make the heart ache. Look at the houses that are built on cheap and low lands; think of the money that is coined out of the necessities of the poorer classes, taken, not out of the pocket merely, but out

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of the best life. Look into these abodes, erected by the rapacity of landlords who care only for a large return to a small outlay, who grow rich on the penury of their fellow-beings, and tell me if it is possible that they should become *homes?*

Nor is it only the poorer classes who suffer in this way. High rents and the wretchedness of accommodation afforded, the niggardliness of landlords, have operated unfavorably upon a large class whose circumstances are considered good. How many a man is compelled to live in quarters which he can never love, never feel to be home, — which always fret him by their bad arrangement, their want of small repairs, their cramped stair-way and entry and chamber, poor cellar and paltry yard, — simply because a class of selfish speculators have gotten possession of the land and crowded it with cheap houses, leaving to him no choice, no mercy, and no hope? How many of those who are compelled to hire houses feel that they get any thing like a just equivalent for what they give? How many when "the lease is up" leave with any feeling akin to that of leaving home? I think that these wooden houses which spring up like mushrooms everywhere about us, many of them double with but a lath and plaster partition between, having no beauty on the outside, no real convenience within, standing anyhow, anywhere, are not only provocatives and

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food for some huge conflagration, and so should be forbidden by law, — not only perpetuate bad taste, and so should be frowned upon by public sentiment, — but stand in the way of the establishment of genuine, independent homes, and should receive the hearty reprobation of every well-wisher of his kind. The buildings, public and private, of a city or village, are not only exponents of the taste of the generation erecting them, but they educate the taste of the generation succeeding. They explain to the traveller the history of the past as much as the hoary monuments of an older civilization do, and they shape the growing sentiment as truly as the grand churches and cathedrals and monuments of antiquity. How much our own Northampton, Springfield, Portsmouth, New Bedford, quiet and sober Salem, say for the past, of the present! Somehow there is a home-spirit which looks out from these and many a lesser New England village you look for in vain in the crowded streets of the city and its suburbs. In them men built houses for their own living in, and the house reflects the home. They were a generation in that respect wiser than this, whose civilization, striding rapidly forward in purely material interests, overlooks the things of sentiment and affection, and leaves them to be plagued by the speculator, who has no higher idea than that of building houses that will pay, not homes that shall bless.

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I would place in the front rank of philanthropy, I would more honor than a hero, the man who should set himself to building homes for the people, — buildings neat, snug, separate, and in good taste, which a man would be content to live in for years, and would come to love. But better than this will it be when every man shall build his own home, or shall find that to buy which shall be his *home*. Is this the impossible thing many make it? Perhaps so, if we are to foster the foolish notion that we must equal or eclipse our neighbor; perhaps so, if we have to wait to grow rich before we can have homes. But I think the essentials of a home are nearer every man's reach than he supposes. A house to be a true home must be strictly adapted to the owner's position in society, his calling and means. The houses of the laborer, the mechanic, the merchant, the professional man, must differ as their callings do. I could not be at home in a laborer's house, or he in mine. The house must be adapted to the man. If you build or buy otherwise, you jeopard the home. Now, I believe that every industrious laborer or mechanic may have a home of his own, if he will drop all ambition, and, to use the homely proverb, "cut his coat according to his cloth." It is not large houses, costly houses, the houses with all modern conveniences, which make the homes, but the houses adapted to the circumstances

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and wants of the individual. I do not say it would be perfectly easy for a man with only his hands to depend upon — especially a young man — to secure a home of his own ; but, without waiting for a class of men whom it is to be hoped God in his own good time will raise up, who shall assist the young and deserving in securing homes, or, more hopelessly still, waiting until legislation shall recognize and provide for this general want, is there not a great deal spent by the laborer and the mechanic and the clerk uselessly, which if laid by every year would make the owning a home not the impossible thing it is held ? And might not the young merchant, instead of giving in to the idea that he cannot withdraw enough from his capital to buy him a home, or that the money spent on a home is lying idle, learn that the best, the surest, even the best-paying investment he could make, would be in a home, which, though he suffer himself to be too busy to enjoy, would be a place of happiness for his wife and children ? In the flush of your success you may call your money idle which is not busy in the market, but how many a man in the panics of these past years has had cause to bless God that he had a home of his own, — no hired house, but a home of his own, to go to for rest and refreshing, a dear asylum from uncertainty and care ? and though the ruthless blast has not always spared the hearth-stone, and the

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keenest pang has been when for the last time the foot crossed the threshold, who that has a heart but has thanked God that he had at least once had a home? Subtract the knowledge and experience of a home that he can call his own from a man's life, and you have subtracted one of the most exquisite pleasures vouchsafed the human heart, — a pleasure cheaply purchased at the cost of any personal sacrifice.

No man needs to own his house more than the hard working-man of moderate means. No one more needs this and every influence of home. One reason assigned for the want of thrift, the low pleasures of the working-man, is the character of the place he lives in, and the fact that the bar, or saloon, or billiard-room will give him cleanliness and comfort his home lacks. It will very soon break down the ambition of an otherwise very worthy man, if he find his home wanting in the cheaper means or appearance of comfort which the places of resort afford, — means or appearances which a large class of tenements do not afford. His own home, — small, but speaking within and without of his care and love, — that is the great safeguard of the man and the family of moderate means. To it, when the day is done, he goes with joy, upon it and its comfort he willingly lays out a portion of his wages. It smiles, in return, as another man's house never can; it rebukes, in his wandering, as only his own home

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could. It is an anchor by which he holds amid the tossing temptations of life, — a place of refuge and of love, whose charms, whose solid, pure delights, prevail against all that pleasure offers or appetite suggests.

Another reason which should operate strongly in favor of every man's owning his house is, that so only can any thing like permanence of residence be secured. This want of permanence is one of the crying sins of the age. It prevents that local attachment which is one of the strongest and purest sentiments of the human breast. No wandering horde of the desert is more restless, unsettled than we. We strike our tents, and flit at any moment, the great ambition of some seeming to be to see how many houses they can reside in. All this is fatal to the home. It breaks up any thing like continuity of life; it prevents fixedness of habit, and so fixedness of purpose. You are always getting ready to live in a new place, never living. Your past is a shifting scene, and your future only prospective change. It makes life a hunt after houses, and its chief end the altering of carpets and putting up of bedsteads, and has introduced the omnipresent furniture-wagon, that melancholy fact in modern civilization, so suggestive of outraged household affections, — that unnatural institution of a people who have ceased to regard permanency of abode among the cardinal virtues. The heart cannot be brought again to

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its right tone, or the life grow rich in home affections, till we shall fall back upon the wisdom of our fathers, who thought a good deal of owning their homes, — till we shall do something toward securing for our children memories as pleasant as those which form so large a part of our past. To how many of us is the old place — humble though it be — the Mecca of our memories, to which our affections make perpetual, involuntary pilgrimage? Was it no sacrifice of our fathers that gave to us this boon, and shall we sacrifice nothing to secure it to our children?

Now what are the essentials to be kept in mind in building a home? I put at the head of the requisites of a house its fitness for domestic purposes. The house is a place to be used by a family for work, for comfort, for sickness, and for health. It is a place to be constantly and variously used. It should be primarily adapted to home wants. There should be a fitness in all its parts to the great ends of home. It need not be large, it need not be costly, but it must be convenient, adapted to the means and the position of the builder, — no way encumbering, but every way helping him.

Is this so in general? Is it with regard to the purposes of use, fitness, that houses are built? If you will take the wide range of farm-house, cottage, suburban and city residences, owned or rented, I think

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you will find that they are built either without plan, or to suit a lot, or to gratify a whim, or to bring most income, or to make a show.

I think that some one else has remarked that man is the only animal who, in the construction of a home, has ventured to disregard the great law of fitness. He has builded for every purpose but that of utility. The cell of the bee, the nest of the bird, the burrow of the fox, the web of the spider, are exactly suited to the wants of the inhabitants. Each builder knows what he requires, and at once, with the utmost economy and ingenuity, sets himself to his task. Instinct does no less for man, and the home of the savage, the wigwam of the Indian, the hut of the Esquimaux, the tent of the Arab, are just what the condition of the occupant demands. The house is the type of the civilization of the inhabitants. It is only as you come to the more advanced stages that there is a departure from this law of fitness, an intrusion of other things into the idea of a home. When wisdom and culture supplant instinct, when the intellect asserts and attains its mastery over the animal, when society is formed and convention rules, the house begins to lose the simpler, more natural characteristics of fitness and use, the advancing man content only when he has grafted on some whim, or followed some fashion, or made some display, converting his home, not into a reflection of

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his own thought and want, but into an undigested mass of rooms and appliances, — windows, doors, gables, piazzas, without meaning and without value and without beauty. It is about a house as it is about a dress. Every thing should mean something, even the ornaments. Nothing is more meaningless than the larger proportion of the dresses one sees. They have no beauty, no substantial value; they do not add to, but subtract from, your idea of the wearer. They encumber without adorning, they conceal where they were meant to enhance, they caricature where they are supposed to ennoble. So it is with a house. If you want merely to show that you can spend money, or have the ambition to attract attention, or be unlike your neighbors, that is one thing; if you want to build a home for yourself and your children, one which you and they shall love, where you wish the household virtues to take root and grow, that is quite another. If your house is to be a mere show place, and your ambition to excite a vulgar approval or envy, you may neglect or banish the useful parts of the house, you may sacrifice utility to appearance; but if you are going to build a *home*, the homely, common, ever-wanted things must be close by, compact and convenient, to be used at no waste of temper, time, or strength. *Utility* should be the Alpha and Omega in a home.

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I know that some of the most *home-ish* (to use a word you will not find in the Dictionary) looking places in the country — the farm-houses which have been the true homes and nurseries of New England character — have wanted not only the graces, but the conveniences, of more modern days. The house is large, not wholly occupied or even finished, poorly arranged, and not over tightly built, while the well is in the yard, and in long row stretch out-houses and barns. The architect to-day brings all these into a snugger compass; but the architect of to-day omits one element of the old home which made amends for all this, which the taste, the advance, or the mistake of the present generation compels him to omit. I mean the large, cheerful, generous, old kitchen, the place where many a man and woman of silks and fashion was brought up, — the true "keeping" or "living room," redolent of the mother's brown bread and pies, fragrant with quiet domestic virtues, the work-place of mothers and daughters in the days when mothers and daughters worked, — the centre of the family circle when the day was done, and father and the boys gathered around the evening table to read or cipher, or play a game, or mend this or that which had been broken about the farm; when neighbors dropped quietly in and were welcome to the chimney-corner, and cider and apples closed the visit;

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when even lovers must sit in the kitchen and with the family, except on Sundays. I do not believe in every thing that is old, but I do believe we have made no gain in surrendering these homely ways and virtues which clustered about that now dishonored place. The kitchen was the *home* in those golden days ere its sacred economies were handed over to the wasteful mercies of ignorant domestics, and though there were no modern labor-saving appliances, yet because the labor was not bought, but each had his post and duty, the home went on more wisely and happily than now. The kitchen was then the blessing of the house. Now it is too frequently the curse, and the troubles it entails have much to do with this rapid filling up of hotels and lodging-houses by those who rather fly from than seek to remedy the evil. Perhaps, as society is, we cannot reinstall the kitchen. I do not believe the idea would be very palatable to those who associate the place with the stupidity of Irish cooks, or regard the toil as a disgrace to their position, or as injuring the complexion and marring the delicacy of the hand. The kitchen was the sanctum of the home, and homes have gained nothing by deserting it. It was the nursery of the character, of the health, the moral and mental strength of the old and middle-aged of to-day, — of virtues which have seemed to wane with the coming in of carpets and curtains and con-

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veniences, and that utter respectability which would gladly forget that a kitchen has a necessary connection with a house.

In a different way, if you would have peace, you must still regard the kitchen. It is now the tyrant of the house, and he who builds his house without a prime regard to that, who plans the rest liberally and leaves that to chance, or, when he finds the cost exceeding his ability, lets the pinch come there, may at once give up the thought of a comfortable home. Let the pinch come in your parlors, your furnishings, — the things for your own luxury or the eye of your visitor; but in a home, the kitchen, the cellar, and the closet must stand before these. No house can be a home which is stinted in the useful things, that is narrow and mean in its arrangements for work, — and that is one reason why these things all over our towns with "*To let*" hanging in the windows can never become genuine homes.

Another thing that should be thought of is *seclusion*. The home ought not to be open to the casual eye, or the secrets of it liable to the prying or the propinquity of neighbors. It ought to stand apart, neither subject to overlooking or overhearing. Every family should be brought up distinct from every other family. The house should be within an enclosure sacred to it. The blessed sun and air should not be cut off from it by

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the intervening of any other house. This is the necessity of cities, which the kind of houses demanded by the city in part remedies; but the cramped homes of the city never come up to the full idea of home. A home should have a yard and a garden. I do not hesitate to say that, as a matter of dollars and cents, it would be better in the end for the individual speculator to lay out each house with a fair garden spot, place it on some general line, employ an architect as well as a carpenter and mason, spend something on shrubs and trees, — in short, make a home of it, — than to cover all his land with wood and mortar; while it would add to the character of the town, introduce a higher order of population, increase taxable property, and do for the place what men in vain look to churches, schools, horse-railroads, gas, and water to do. The man of thought and intelligence, who wants a permanent abode for his family, will look to the house before he will these other things. If he cannot find a home, these will be a small temptation.

Besides, to the well ordering of a family, privacy is absolutely essential. What chance is there for that, where houses stand so near that, through the open windows, inevitably, you hear much that is said, or through a thin partition comes the thrumming of a piano, the scolding of a mother, the crying of the child, the entrance and exit of every guest? This sort of living

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is only too common. It is a necessity many submit to because they can do no better, while it is a submission which is likely to act unfavorably upon the rising generation, who must get their idea of home from the homes in which they are nurtured. We all know very well that the presence of a guest or a boarder breaks up much of the peculiar life of home, interrupts its free and steady flow. We all know that the vacation we spend at boarding-places is too apt to interfere with home precepts and discipline, — sow tares amid our wheat. How much greater the harm which comes from always living so near to others, so exposed front and rear, and both sides, that inevitably, in spite of you, the daily life of yourself and your children is subject to influences you would gladly be rid of. I do not believe a truly independent home possible — a home standing on its own basis and supported by its own principles as every home should — so long as houses are built as a very large majority of those in our neighborhood are. Not as a matter of pride or of mere feeling, but as a matter of principle, I would not occupy a house where I was not or could not be alone. Nearness to one's business, or any thing that could be urged in favor of such a residence, would not weigh as a feather with what could be urged against.

I know there are many persons, even fathers and mothers, who will not sympathize with this at all.

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They would rather live in public. They want to see and hear what is going on. They don't care any thing about yards and gardens. All that can be said of such is, that they are falling into the great American current which sets against the home, whose top folly is seen in the life of the New York hotel. The man who has forgotten the free range his childhood loved over the old farm or through the pastures, and refuses for his children even a garden or a yard, the man who prefers his children should be educated in the street, or turns them to play in some other man's grounds, the man who forgets how much more of good outdoors teaches, in the earlier years, than the costly parlor can, who sacrifices his children's good to his desire for a wider range indoors, or a more costly abode, is traitor to the best memories of his own life, and working against the best life of his child. Contentment with some conditions is only a proof how far man may fall from his true position, yet be unconscious of his fall. The contented slave is the saddest evidence of the atrocity of slavery.

Permanence, utility, seclusion, are the three things a man should specially seek in the house he is to call home. In its exterior it should violate no law of taste, while it should be suggestive of the character and position of the inmates. You go through the streets of a city or town, and you inevitably draw your infer-

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ences of the inhabitants from their houses. If you are hungry, or have lost your way, you select the house at which you will ask. Even organ-grinders and peddlers study the outside before venturing within the gate. Some houses suggest vanity, pride, meanness, as surely as some suggest home. I remember that, pacing backward and forward through Fifth Avenue in New York, and marvelling at the prodigality of the cost of that double row of sandstone palaces, I felt the chill of all that splendor striking through me till I came upon a square, sober, though evidently costly house, and I said, This looks like a home. I asked the owner, and from his well-known name I knew that I was right. In the landscape it is the home that satisfies and pleases, — not the abode of wealth or of show, but the abode over which that nameless grace of home is thrown. I have seen that charm embracing as a halo the little one-story, unpainted wayside cottage, equally with the glorious old gambrel-roof homestead beneath the trees, — to me the type and symbol of a New England home. I have seen it invest the home of poverty, while refusing to linger about the abode of pride, — a something which seems to radiate from the life within through shingle and clapboard, as the life of the soul speaks in the outward expression of the face and the form.

As a part of the home, a single word of its furnish-

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ing. In proportion as you introduce splendor, you banish love. No child can grow up to love a house so adorned that he associates with it the perpetual warning to be careful of his hands and feet, all the freedom of whose motions must be checked by the cost of the carpet and the material of the sofa. If there must be a company-room, to be kept sacred from the intrusion of the child's foot, then let there be special pains that there be some room sacred to childhood, — the wild domain of disorder and frolic, where things may be banged and broken according to the laws of an innocent misrule, without fear of rebuke. The furniture of home should be for use, and every adorning subsidiary to propriety and taste. The papers upon the wall, the casts, engravings, ornaments, should all have reference to home culture; not stiff or ugly or over many, but such as, living with the child, insensibly educate and elevate his taste, as living with virtue insensibly educates and elevates his character. A house that chills a stranger with the idea that its furnishings are to be seen and not used, which reveals no trace of childhood, or only of childhood prematurely prim, — rooms stiff and bristling and suggestive of the upholsterer, — is no home. How gladly one escapes from all this drear array of show to some cosey, free-and-easy, comfortable room, whose furniture bears the marks of use, — where there

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are no angles and straight lines, but the unstudied order, or the equally unstudied disorder, of a free and happy household.

The idea of a home cannot be independent of the house. I do not deny that there are homes where there is no advantage of the house; still, to the perfect idea of the perfect home the house is essential; — not a house of cost, but a house appropriate to the condition of the occupant, a permanent, useful, secluded abode, — a place not for the guest, but for the family, not for the adult merely, but for the child. The idea every man should have in building ought to be to build a home, whether the house be for his own occupancy or to let. It is time there was a little more humanity in landlords, and that public opinion rebuked this coining of money at the expense of the finer sentiments of the heart and home. We have had a precious inheritance in the old homes of New England. Our fathers builded better than they knew when they erected them, and he shall be the benefactor of his children who shall, under altered circumstances of time and place, transmit to his children a true home; and he shall stand highest among architects who shall strive, not to build the churches, the capitals, the monuments of the nation, but who shall give himself to the skilful planning of homes for the people, — a work Downing had so nobly begun when

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he was suddenly taken away. The nations of antiquity, whose marvels of learning and of art still excite the admiration and wonder of the world, had no homes; there are no homes where the Bedouin slumbers in the shadow of the pyramids, or fodders his steed amid the crumbling magnificence of a long-buried despotism; the gay and glittering Frenchman has no word for home; while the cities of the Continent, to whose monuments the rich, the restless, and the wise make pilgrimage, have no homes, the wretched hovel alternating with the palace and the ruin. They may do to admire as works of art, but let us have to show the traveller, to bless ourselves, to help our children, a land of homes, speaking to the eye of the stranger, and dear to the heart of the dweller.

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II.

HOME, ITS INSTITUTION AND CONSTITUTION.

HAVING SPOKEN of the house, I have something now to say of the family in the house.

The idea of seclusion, isolation, is still fundamental. As the house should stand alone, so should the family be alone. It is a curious fact that the word *home*, in its derivation, signifies to enclose. A home is an enclosure, a secret, separate place, — a place shut in from, guarded against, the whole world outside. This idea is essential to it all the way through, and it is because of this seclusion, this shutting in, and the host of virtues which only so are possible, that there cannot be found in the whole range of language, ancient or modern, a word to convey the idea of our English word *home*. It is the centralizing of the joys, interests, affections of the heart, upon the place of abode, — partly the result of temperament, and partly the necessity of climate, — it is the sacred seclusion in which the family dwells, — which has gradually led to the establishment in the Anglo-Saxon race of a

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home, a word in itself suggestive of a variety and a combination of virtues, possessions, and hopes beyond any other. Obliged by climate to seek comfort within doors, our English ancestors gradually accumulated the means of happiness about their abodes, until the home has become, as we have received it of them, the beneficent foster-mother of all that is best in the heart and in the man. It is from the fact that we are an in-doors people, that much of our peculiarity and our advantage comes. As another has said, "Make this whole nation an out-of-door people, teach them to find their amusement, their happiness, away from home, in gardens, in *cafés*, in the streets, as it is in France and Italy, and it would be as difficult to maintain our Republic as it has been to establish one in Paris and Rome. No one who has ever visited those cities, or Naples or Venice, or who has studied the habits and customs of their population, can fail to see the cause of their violent commotions, and uneasy, restless striving. The mass of the people are without homes and home influences. They live out of doors, in perpetual excitement, and the only idea of home to thousands of them is a place to sleep in."

Even the German, many of whose domestic habits and customs we should do well to imitate, hardly fashions his home after the better English model. He does not so much bring his joys and pleasures to his

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family, as take his family with him to his joys and pleasures. You meet a Yankee upon a holiday, and he is either alone or with some one of his own sex seeking amusement; you meet an Irishman, he is stalking onward with his hands in his pocket, while puffing and toiling behind him, with baby and bundle, shuffles and sweats his wife; but the German comes with all his household gods, lending a hand at the babies, good-natured and thoughtful of the good wife, and though, like Mrs. John Gilpin, "of a frugal mind," determined that the time shall be a good one generally. He takes his home with him where he goes, and so God bless him for that; but I think he and it go too much to make it ever the one great love. Indeed, the German love seems to be rather for the Fatherland than the one home spot, while that Swiss homesickness, of which we hear so much, is largely a pining for the free mountain air and the wild mountain life. Climate, temperament, seclusion, combine to make the English homes, and that of those who are English in descent, the peculiar and separate places they are. However false we or they may be to it, we should all be grateful that we have so pure a model as the ideal Anglo-Saxon home.

In ordaining the home the Divine Mind seems to have laid broadly and deeply the foundations of an institution which should satisfy the wants of the most

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uncultured, at the same time that it should be capable of stretching itself out so as to satisfy the highest aspirations of the most refined. Doubtless the primeval homes before the flood answered every desire, as those within the Arctic Circle, of which Dr. Kane has given such graphic description, still do. Man at an advanced stage of culture is not content with these. They only offend. His home must be a very different thing, not only outwardly, but inwardly; not only in all its daily ordering and purpose, but in its very commencement. At a low stage of advancement, that commencement may be of no special moment. Upon what principle the male and female come together may be unimportant. It may be a matter of barter, or of compulsion, or of caste, or of any whim or accident. Where the woman is to be the drudge, or slave, to grind the corn, drag the plough, or carry the burdens, — where the man is the indolent tyrant or lord, the hunter or warrior alternating with the lethargic brute, and the children are to grow only to the same stature, — it makes little odds how the family is brought together. There are no special duties and obligations arising from the connection, to be influenced decidedly one way or the other by it. But as men advance in civilization, and become amenable to Christian laws, the manner in which a home shall be commenced is of first and lasting importance. Every

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thing in its success depends upon the fitness of the founders of the home to each other and their work. They who propose to marry have in the outset a most difficult question to settle. It is not one in which fancy, or passion, or property, or position, or caprice, custom, or convenience, should have a word to say. They have to consult, not merely for the present, but for the future; not merely their own good, but the good of those whom God shall by and by intrust to their charge. It is the most important question given to man's decision, for of it are even the issues of eternity. When I think how inexperienced we are when the choice is made, by what motives we are swayed, by what customs blinded, by what outsides deceived, — when I think how impertinently base considerations thrust themselves in upon a decision so momentous, — I wonder that so many escape a fatal error, that so many homes are fair and bright with love and promise. When we reflect that the selection is often made, and the future determined, at a time when we consider no habit or principle of character fixed, one may almost marvel that a Divine wisdom should have left the matter to individual decision; and yet God has done in this, as he always does, that which is best. Where we are compelled to go, we find neither happiness nor virtue; and were wives and husbands chosen for us, — were marriage a compulsion, and not a

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choice, — the home would sink rapidly back toward barbarism. Kings, and the so-called nobles, marry thus, but do the chill splendors of their state create a home? May we not define the word *home* as a thing impossible for kings, and say of it, that freedom of choice is one of the corner-stones of its permanence and purity and value?

While few, I suppose, will deny that the greatest precaution should be exercised in the matter of choice, that marriage should not be the mad freak of a passion or the stupid bargain of convenience or of gold, there is a question lying behind this, not often thought of, but none the less momentous. A writer, whom I cannot but think speaks wisely, says: "The seasonable time for the exercise of prudence is not so much in choosing a wife or a husband, *as in choosing with whom you will so associate as to risk the engendering of a passion.*" And here I shall come to an issue at once with the younger portion of my readers, if not with their parents. The younger will ask, why should you seek to circumscribe the freedom of acquaintance, by suggesting the possibility that out of it may grow some serious, perhaps not wise, affection? I reply, Because serious and not wise affections have again and again sprung out of the unguarded, unsuspecting intercourse of the young. The parents will say, Why suggest the idea of love at all to those too

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young to be thinking of it? Why put an awkward constraint upon intimacies and companionships so pleasant and so innocent? I reply, that the idea is in the heads, if not the hearts, of the young already, and we all know it. Every young person of seventeen or eighteen years of age shows by the accidents of conversation, if no other way, that this thing floats more or less distinctly before them. At this age, the young are constantly having their partialities, if not their loves, — many affections which shape and control the lives of the parties and of generations do grow up that time, — and knowing that, and how uncontrollable and unaccountable are the leaps and leanings of the young heart, a wise, a religious, even a worldly prudence, would demand care in the choice of associates.

I do not think it prudish or unnecessary to say to those of that age, in presence of the fact of such exposure, Let your society be with those among whom you are not afraid to run the risk of a serious attachment. And I must go a step further back than this, and say that this is not a matter to be left wholly with the inexperience of the young, but should be one of the things thought of by father and mother. The older civilization of England and the Continent attends to this, — in many cases too exclusively attends to it, leaving the child no freedom of choice what-

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ever. We, in deference to our ideas of liberty, leave the whole thing with the young. No young people in the world are so early and so exclusively their own masters. Parents elsewhere have something to say about many things with which parents among us are not permitted to meddle. Too often the last advice sought by the young is parental advice. The young man and young woman choose their own associates; why, they could hardly tell you, but mostly the whole thing is an accident. It is equally accidental whether the parents know them by name or by sight. They are street and party acquaintances, sometimes never introduced to the home, and the first thing parents may know is, that they are called on to receive into their affections, into a son's or a daughter's place, one of whose character and antecedents they know absolutely nothing. In this they are not true custodians of their children's welfare. They have failed at least in one of the earlier necessities of their relationship, — in getting the confidence of their children. I am no advocate of a system of espionage on the part of the parent. I abhor every thing like management and manœuvring; the deliberate, pitiful making of matches; the unnatural trade that parents sometimes make, — the soul of a child for the purse of a rascal. But I ask if there be not a middle ground which may be safely and wisely taken, — if, without setting one's

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self deliberately to prevent this, or bring about that, it be not possible so to control the companionships of the young, that the risks attending marriage may be greatly abridged? With very few exceptions, the young person judiciously brought up will give heed to the wisdom — I do not say whim, or prejudice, or passion — of the parent, will drop the objectionable companion, or put a check upon the freedom of intercourse. With all this, and with every care, there will still be some shade of truth in the common saying, that "marriage is a lottery." But it need be only a shade!

The choice made, the abode selected, the home commenced, and the domestic relations are established which Aristotle calls "the master facts of humanity." Two comparative strangers come together in relations of closest intimacy and dependence, to build out of their oppositions of sex, education, temperament, an harmonious home. They are to learn that high mystery, that art of arts, the art of living together. They are to see day by day all that is factitious drop away, and, with no retreat, to find the dream vanish before the coming of the fact. Too happy, if, in the dropping of the romance, they do not falter in their love. Differing in gifts and powers, they are to discover that neither by nature nor by right is the one superior to the other, but each the complement of each, the one

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possessing what the other lacks; and that the true home alone is possible where these gifts and powers have fair and equal play. There must be no strife for mastery. That question is settled of God. There is no mastery. Male and female made he them, and then brought them together in one, so that he might make a perfect humanity. The gifts of the two are diverse, but only man has said that those of the man were superior to those of the woman. Unlike we are, but not unequal. The man may be the *head*, but then the woman is the *heart;* and without the heart, of what avail the head? That estate into which man enters by virtue of a primal fiat of God, which was cleared, by the Saviour's consecration, from Jewish and Gentile corruption, ought never to have raised the question which has so long vexed the world, and is still mooted by almost every man and woman. The learned Athenians may have considered the woman merely the household drudge; the Chinese may destroy the large proportion of female children; the old Russian, as he gave away his daughter, may have said, "Here, wolf, take thy lamb"; and Mahomet may have taught that women have no souls. But under a Christian dispensation, in an enlightened land and the nineteenth century, it should be felt that woman, no longer the drudge or the toy of man, holds a place in the eye of God equal with that of man, her

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womanly graces as much needed to the perfecting of the idea of home as his more manly virtues, — that she is not to serve or he to rule.

The change in character, which is often observed to commence during engagement, goes on toward completion after marriage. Character is never the same after marriage as before. It is in deference to this change, and to give ample time for the mutual adjustment of new relations, perhaps, that by a divine law the complete establishment of the home is postponed, and the husband and wife have become used to each other and the reciprocal duties and influences of their position before they are permitted to become father and mother, and allowed to enter upon that connection with immortal spirits which lifts them to the highest earthly dignity, while it devolves upon them the greatest responsibilities.

The constitution of the home is wanting a something essential till there are children in it. No family is perfect that has not a baby in it, and no home complete that has not the presence of children.

I go a step further, and say that, in order to the perfect constitution of home, the children must be of both sexes. There must be girls among the boys, and boys among the girls. No one should repine to whom God has ordered it otherwise; yet there will always be a want in the home circle and a vacant place in

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the affections — a desire unanswered and unsatisfied — so long as only one sex is represented at our hearth. There are affections that can only be called out, influences only to be exerted, proportion and finish to character only to be attained, where both boys and girls grow together in the home. The fathers who are growing old without a daughter's clinging affection, the mothers who pass their prime without a son's chivalric devotion; the brothers who come up rude, unpolished, and untamed for want of a sister's gentleness, — shy, awkward, and ill at ease; the sisters who have never felt the proud, encouraging protection of a brother's love, — each and all have lost from their life an element to completeness, and the home, happy and bright as it is, is shorn of a great glory. The constitution of the home is, then, only perfect when daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, cluster beneath the parental roof.

Some one has said that home is the only thing that has survived the fall. I deny that. Home only became a fact after Eve had sinned. The home did not survive the fall, but followed it. If, as I contend, the family is essential to the idea of home, then there was no home till man had begun to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. Only through pain and sorrow, outside of Eden, has woman ever been a mother. Paradise was fair to gaze on and to dwell in, — fair

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as a garden, but as a habitation desolate, as a home impossible. There were all things bright save the bright presence of a child, and every melody save the liquid music of an infant's voice. Eden never knew the joy of a mother, never saw a woman smile upon her first-born babe, or witnessed the passionate yearning and tender devotion of a mother's heart. Along its shaded walks never echoed the patter of little feet; out from its shady bowers never peered, wondering and delighted, childhood's face; its deep recesses were never startled by the sharp, clear, merry ring of childhood's laugh, or its stately order and decorum set at naught by the impish mischief and irreverent rioting of childhood's frolic. Beautiful and grand and adorned was Eden, yet not the type of home. That is the fact of the fall, the gain man made in losing Paradise. It was not till the flaming sword flashed in her backward-gazing eyes that Eve knew that she was the mother of all the living; and so the outer world, the world of toil and sorrow and death, possessed a joy that the inner world of Paradise had not. And so I cannot make that Eden, Paradise. Beautiful as that picture may be of a first state of innocence and ignorance, I cannot feel that it transmits to us any idea of home. If Eve lost Paradise to man, the loss has proved a blessed gain, for it has given us the necessity of labor, and it has given us homes. Some day the

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world will come to see that this strange allegory, whatever it may mean, upon which so much of human faith has stood, cannot represent a paradise. Its first temptation produced sin, and that sin gave to man a home, and that necessity for toil which is his next best earthly blessing.

A home, constituted as I have said, cannot be left to itself. There is no inevitable law by which it shall be impelled toward success. It has no charmed life. Because of its Divine institution and constitution, it is not shielded from danger. Indeed, because it is so noble a thing, it is the more subject to danger. Were the home the low and grovelling thing the savage makes it, a mere place of eating and sleeping, and the barest necessities of existence, there would be no thought or need of watch over it. It could not well sink. The more it becomes elevated, the more sensible men and women are of its responsibilities, the further they advance in general and individual culture, the more numerous and threatening are the dangers to which it is exposed. The home of to-day, both in city and village, is more sorely beset from without and from within than the homes of our fathers. Capable of giving more, it is constantly liable to give less. Indeed, we feel it does give less. It has had much added of external advantage. In some things its gain has been commensurate with the

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gain outside, while that very gain has seemed to subtract from its solid and substantial qualities. We are not satisfied with the condition of our homes. They are not what they should be, and do not give us what they should, and we are disposed to lay the blame upon the times upon which we have fallen, and the influences about us we cannot shake off or rise above. Is not more of the trouble in ourselves? Have we not grown supine about these our nearest duties, and gone mad after many inventions? Our first affections are drawn off to other things. Our time, power, thought, are given to them. Great and wise are we in the perishing things of the day. The world is our field, the elements are our slaves, and the hoar sea bows its crested head before our coming. All things about know their master.

But this little sacred centre, home, how shamefully is it neglected; and how restless and fretful are we if our neglect is suggested to us, and a reform proposed which shall begin with ourselves. Take the man, he whose very name of husband—in its derivation, *house-band*—shows that his chief and leading duty should be to bind together the house. Take the man, be he merchant, mechanic, or the man of a profession. He knows that he neglects his home, but he calms his conscience by pleading the inexorable will of his business. But what is business that it has any right to

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contravene that old law of God, which makes the man, who has voluntarily assumed the post of father, the head of the home? What right has it so to absorb him that he has no time, no heart, for his home duties, no pleasure in them? Why must homes have the worst hours of a man's day, his tired hours? Why must those who love him never see him at his best, and why should the whole machinery of domestic economy and rule, all authority and discipline and influence, devolve upon the wife, who in her own appointed sphere has quite enough to do? Who gave man leave to delegate his authority, and bind himself to another service? I know what may be urged in excuse. I hear men constantly lament and tamely submit. They see a lion in the way. And yet you put any enterprise before them that they think will pay, and lions are nothing. I never knew men convinced of any thing that they did not do. Let this generation once feel, as it must feel, that this neglect of home is no necessity, but a sin; let it rest red and hot upon men's consciences that God has given them this charge which they have deserted; let these homes grow worse and worse, as they inevitably must, till self-interest rouse to reform, if duty do not, — and you will find business as easy to control as you now imagine it to be difficult. If the man was to be a mere money-maker, why was it not so ordained in the beginning,

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and the family organized without the father? No; this is a fearful mistake, and it is telling fearfully upon the characters of our sons and daughters. Upon the old homestead, or when business was a thing of comparative leisure, we knew our fathers, we grew up by them. They watched over us, rewarded and punished, rebuked and encouraged us, and we can trace much of what is best in us back to that steady intercourse between us. Where is that influence to-day? Who of us all is really doing any thing about the daily culture of our sons and daughters, and who or what is supplying our place?

I speak thus of the fathers, not because I suppose that all the trouble with our homes comes from their neglect, but because I think it mainly does, directly or indirectly. The men in middle life are the responsible men in the home as well as in society, and to the men of middle life mainly I speak. With them this neglect of home commenced, with them should commence the remedy. And there can be no remedy till they choose to apply it. Mothers may be all devotion and fidelity, all wisdom and persistence, but there are things in the ordering of our homes and the training of our families which no woman comprehends or is equal to. A man who has been educated exclusively under female influence always wants a something of manliness. What he may gain in tenderness and a

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certain elevation of sentiment he loses in strength and health. The home requires the male and the female influence, as God saw in the beginning. The father must coöperate with the mother, not spasmodically, but continually, leaving her liberty for her own special work, the sphere for which she was made, out of which she should never be expected to labor. I think it will be time to blame the really faithful mothers, when the fathers show some disposition to reform.

If I were to mention an error in the wives and mothers, which seems to me to set against true home life, it would be their devotion to the mere detail of domestic life. They never rise above it, and leave a painful impression upon their children even, of the hopeless drudgery of a mother and a wife. May not this be one reason why the daughters so cordially hate and so wholly neglect every thing pertaining to work, and vastly prefer the indolence and mental and moral exposure of a hotel or boarding-house, to the cares, but the securities, of housekeeping? Have you not heard daughters say, "Well, I never mean to work as mother does," and do you not know that they keep their word? I think it may be difficult to prevent this so long as the husbands leave home cares wholly to the wives, and yet I am not sure that woman need sink so utterly all that is higher in her, become so mere a devotee to her home toil. Duty to her home

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is not summed up, exhausted in *work*. Kitchen, nursery, chambers, are not the only spheres for her adorning. She is not the wife — the *weft*, one who weaves — merely ; but she has a higher walk before her children, and duties to them as souls, which she may not slight, which she should not delegate. I am not sure but it is the mission of the sewing-machine to ransom the mother and the wife, to leave her fingers idle for a little, and give her time to remember and re-collect the womanly powers that have long been lost under the pressure of daily domestic duty, — give her time and heart to undertake the higher culture of her children. For the daughters' sakes I would ask the mothers if they are not mistaken in narrowing the duty of the home so much to mere toil? Is there not a better and a brighter side possible for you and for them, and would it not be well for your present influence over them, and their own by and by advantage, to show that work must sometimes stand aside for pleasure or improvement? How would the faded and jaded mothers and wives of middle life put on their bloom and spirits again if only they would seize now and then a little seasonable intellectual or physical recreation, and how much brighter and wiser would homes be if the mother, now and then, changed work, and showed to her husband and her children that she has a mind as well as hands!

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I grant that it will not be easy to set one's self against the drift which sets against a woman from the moment of her marriage. "At the altar she imagines herself united to a man of warm affections, noble thoughts, and great protective power, — one for whose head the church roof is scarcely holy cover enough but she finds herself at home, instead of all this, to have married a craving body of wants, — shirts that want washing, hose that want mending, whims that want attending to, ailments that want poulticing, appetites that want cooking for, perverseness that wants bearing with, passions that want patience, and cowardly spirits that want comforting." The ideal of motherhood too vanishes with equal rapidity and entireness in presence of the harsh and tangible reality. Children are not cherubs, nor always such as we imagine those the Saviour blessed. They, too, are a bundle of wants, — troubles that want soothing, tears that want wiping, effort that wants encouraging, hunger that wants appeasing, clothes that want patching, and mischief and disobedience that want the closet or the rod. If against all these the mother and wife make head, rising superior to all their wear and worry, and causing home to feel all the genuine nobleness of her womanhood, her children shall call her blessed, and her husband shall rise up and praise her.

The key-note of the family is struck by the parents.

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The home is what they make it. The plastic mind of the child inevitably takes the impression they put upon it. The earlier years of childhood, the later years of youth, the intercourse and mutual influence of brother and sister, the character of the man and woman, — themselves the future teachers and guides of their own children, — depend largely upon what they have found their parents to be in their own home. What respon sibility rests on us each and all from the beginning! — that the man select with prudence, and the woman reject what she cannot prudently accept; that in the early days of wedded life, before cares and children come, the art of living together be well learned; that when the family is once established, the father neglect it not for his business, or the mother for her work. The home has affections which should be cherished, aspirations which should be recognized, capacities which should be fostered. It has minds to be cultivated, hearts to be kept pure and made noble, souls to be saved; and, if you would have it not like the garden of the sluggard, all grown over with briers and thorns, but what home may be, the place of your pride and your joy, the rest of your body and the calm haven of your spirit, if you would see good days and be made glad by the virtues and the successes of your children, make it a simple place of simple pleasures and grateful duties, a place in which each

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lives with each and for each, in which parent and child grow up together, the parent wisely cultivating and supporting, the child returning the reverence and love that are natural to it; make it a place your child goes out from reluctantly, not with a mere vapid sentiment or a positive disgust, but with a deep, unchanging love, a love that ever and ever repeats, as he sadly separates from it, or from distant lands or years looks back upon it, "*There is no place like home.*"

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III.

HOME INTERCOURSE.

THE HOME-CIRCLE established, the life in the home commenced, of what kind and to what purpose shall the intercourse be between these immortal spirits brought by the will of God into the most intimate relations? Shall it be of chance, a thing unthought of, guided neither one way nor the other; or shall it be under law, always looking to some definite end, to which, however indirectly, it is always drawing nearer?

Perhaps the question is an open one. Some would say that to attempt any thing like law in a thing so constant, so free, so familiar as domestic life, would be seriously to abridge it in these its most valuable characteristics. It would make it unnatural and constrained, and render its intercourse but an epitome of the intercourse of men in the world. That we certainly do not want. Heaven forbid that the hollow artificiality and constraint which characterize our social lives should gain a footing in our homes. There

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should be one place sacred to human nature and the human heart, one place uncontaminated by the restraints of society which make men to each other so unlike what they are in themselves. There ought to be within the home the fullest and frankest interchange of thought, conviction, and purpose, the most unrestricted living out of the life within. Will the establishment of some controlling power check or prevent this? Will it not rather promote it?

The consequence of all judicious law, thoroughly administered, is freedom. Perfect liberty is that which is perfectly submissive to a perfect law. The perfect liberty of the Saviour was the result of his perfect submission to the Divine law. The liberty we admire in the playful limbs of the young animal, in the grace of the swallow's flight, or the proud sweep of the eagle's wing, is the perfect submission to the law which controls and makes possible such results. This is liberty which never can exist except under law. Where there is no law, liberty is changed to license, and the difference you may see in the graceless plunges of the kite when the string is broke, in the mad erratics of the locomotive when it has left the track, or, among men, in the atrocities of a mob, a rebellion of slaves, or a mutiny of Sepoys. Law is the builder of the world, the conservator and the impulse of society, and right laws never fetter, but free. If we are to free the

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home from many things which threaten it, if we are to check that license which has largely possessed it, if we are to have a true liberty again within it, we must bring it under law, and the daily intercourse — a thing whose influence is never intermitted, a thing never to be considered of small moment — should have its law. It should be the established purpose of the home to make all intercourse between its members — of whatsoever kind it may be — subsidiary, however remotely in some instances, to the advance of the soul in its truest culture, just as it is the object of the Christian man to make every thing which he does in life tend toward one end, an object he does not lose sight of in his pleasures any more than in his duties.

What are some of the general laws which will tend to promote a true home intercourse, laws whose pressure shall be felt by all every day, but only as the pressure of the air is felt, as an element of life and freedom?

I should say, first of all, that without the spirit of self-denial a true and improving home intercourse is impossible. It is hard enough to get along in the ordinary intercourse of life with selfish people. They mar every occasion and every scene into which they intrude, and the presence in the home circle of a single selfish person, parent or child, breaks up every thing like harmony and satisfaction. In the home re-

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lations all selfishness should be abjured, and the most scrupulous and painstaking care be constantly exercised that in no way self-love infringe upon or disturb the rights or happiness of others. Dante, describing his visit to the Infernal Regions, says that written over the gateway was an inscription ending with these words, "Let him who enters here bid farewell to hope." So over the door-way of each home should there be inscribed, Let him who enters here bid farewell to self. There is no power in the home, in its nature or its constitution, which can stand against selfishness, whether it be the selfishness of all or the selfishness of one. Give it every advantage, all that position, culture, wealth may give, yet is it impossible that it should resist the benumbing influence of one selfish soul. It is blighted so, even as the beauty of Eden was blighted by the selfishness of Eve. You and I have seen and felt this, nay, have we not ourselves been conscious that some petty, selfish desire of our own has struck roughly the delicate home-chords, and brought hoarse jangling into the domestic harmony? And are none of us prevailingly selfish at home, using its sanctity and seclusion for the exercise of a spirit we dare not show to men? Are there none of us, standing well with men for courtly urbanity, before whom home cowers, all its doings and its sayings, its omissions and its commissions, ordered to

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meet our will or avert our displeasure? Is there no father and husband of us all who feels it his prerogative to have every thing at home to suit him, — his whim, his comfort, his pleasure, the law of all, which anxious wife and timid children study and endeavor to satisfy? Is there no one of us that meanest of all mean things, a domestic tyrant? And are there no children, growing into men and women, wearying parental indulgence and taxing parental love, and alienating brotherly or sisterly affection, by persisting in consulting only for self? Are none of our homes desecrated by these grosser forms of selfishness, or by such as, less offensive in their form, are still as baleful in their spirit? Then are our homes happy homes, then have we escaped that which so largely characterizes the home, — an abode which many seem to think was created for the fullest exercise and the largest license of their own self-will, but which is, indeed, only *a home* when all self-will is shut out, when each has learned those mutual compromises which alone make a true living together possible. Self-denial should be the first law of the home.

Again; the difficulties in our home intercourse spring very much from our ignorance of each other. The members of a household should therefore become acquainted with each other. This is not the unmeaning phrase it may at first seem. It is not an uncom-

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mon thing to find those living together intensely ignorant of each other. Whole families grow up in daily contact with each other, yet each as ignorant of each as if a hemisphere divided them. Have you never had a young person come to you and say, "I love to talk with you, — somehow or other I cannot say these things to father and mother, but you understand me"? Is there not a deal of this alienation between the members of a household, this lack of home sympathy, which sends the craving spirit abroad to utter confidences which ought to be home confidences? It seems to be taken for granted by parents and brothers and sisters, that, from the fact of sharing the same blood and dwelling under the same roof, they must be acquainted with each other. They think it necessary to study the character of other men in order to get along with them, but they suppose the home requires nothing of this. Now the home is a miniature world. Within its four walls are brought together the widest contrasts in endowment and attainment. There is every possible diversity in a family, — diversity in the degrees of affection, the love of a brother for a sister is very unlike that of the sister for the brother, that of the child for the mother is very unlike his love for the father. Then there are diversities in character. The mature wisdom of the father differs from the tender affection of the mother. And among the children

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one is brave, another timid; one is enthusiastic, another doubting; one is thoughtful, another reckless; one overflows with humor, another is sedate. These and a thousand other differences appear in the same family, are not accidents, but essential to the idea of a family. In a family meet every variety of human character; the highest possible range of virtue, the strongest possible incentive to excellence, brought into contrast and contact with almost all modes and causes of human disagreement, and these not by any perversion, but by a necessity, of which we need to be at all times aware. The family of but one sex or one pursuit, with no diversity of temper and disposition, is not a family.

It is strange how little a fact so patent seems to be regarded in the intercourse of home life. If you were to say to a father, "You do not know your child," he would consider you guilty of a most unwarrantable impertinence. Not know his own child! what an absurdity. Absurd as it is, observation and experience both assure us that it is very common; and the one inflexible law of the house, the one iron demand, the one and the same expectation of each and all, prove how little those who stand at the head understand those placed in their charge. The fact about a home which has boys and girls in it is, that it is made up of the most diverse material. We often amuse

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ourselves with being surprised that there should exist these family dissimilarities. We say, "Who would suppose they were brother and sister?" as if ever since Cain killed Abel there had not been in human homes every conceivable range and gradation of character; as if anybody ever did find similarity the law of the family.

This dissimilarity is one of the most perplexing things about a family, requiring patience, care, impartiality; and if parents would prevent the making of a wretched mistake and failure, they should aim to acquire a thorough knowledge of the composition of their own families, — a study taxing mind and heart severely, — and the whole family government and life should be based upon what they discover. Dealing with children, always a difficult matter, should not be left to the hazard of impulse or caprice, but be guided by knowledge. You feel that certain households go on much more satisfactorily than others. They are not the homes of great external advantage; you would not mark the parents as superior, or the children as unlike all children; but there is a charm about the family that you may not understand, and puzzle yourself to account for. There is no less of exuberant spirit, no less of jocund mirth, no less of ease and naturalness, — nothing to give that painful feeling of the unnatural curb and drill which breaks some families

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into premature proprieties, — but a freedom which never infringes, a confidence that is never abused, a judgment that seems never to err, control that is not a curb, and a harmony of which such discordant material seems to others incapable. If you could get at the secret of this, you would probably find that the parents had made it a point to know their children, had not been content to know their countenances and voices and manners, and a few outside and obvious peculiarities, but had studied them in each step of their progress, had adapted their intercourse with each to each, had taught their children as they grew to recognize and respect each other's individuality, and so had gradually constructed a genuine family, that truest and most needed of human institutions. I do not believe there is any accident about a good home, any more than there is any accident about a fine tree. Both are the products of well-considered opposites brought into harmony by a superintending wisdom.

I do not think this knowledge is often *sought* by the parent. I do not think he sets himself to find out what is going on within the heart and mind of his child. Necessity sometimes forces it upon him, accident sometimes reveals it, or a shrewd guess may detect some things; but the deliberate searching into the peculiarities of his children, and the ordering his

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and their intercourse by what he discovers, is the rare work of the home-head. How much real conversation goes on in our homes? How much questioning of what is learned at school, from books, from others? how much of what each one learns from himself? how much interchange of thought and feeling? Here is a child's mind, a germ of wisdom, wonder, and power, compassed about by infinite mysteries, of which it is on all hands seeking the solution. The child mind does not stand out in God's world as the adult mind does, — callous, or self-satisfied, or sceptical, — but in the spirit of childhood, and with more reverence than we know, asks that it may believe. It turns to us, who are its natural teachers, whom it looks up to with the same love and reverence it looks on all things. What do we? Listen, explain, draw out, lead on? or do we rebuff, and send the opening spirit shuddering back within itself, and teach it in its early hours to keep close-locked all its inner wants? Do we dive, as we might, into the mysterious depths of the child-nature, or, taking its wings, not clogged as ours, soar upward toward those other mysteries which wait and watch for our coming? A little spirit peering all aglow with wonder in at the doorway of knowledge, do we lift its feet over the threshold, and encourage it to pursue its way from room to room, touching and tasting and appropriating of the heaped-up treasure

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stored therein? Is it not rather that the child forces its way, despite the neglect, the indifference, the repulse of parents, who know nothing less than what it knows, or stupidly wonder how it got such things? Home talk! it is the talk of the elders, of sermons, of business, of fashions, of neighbors; it is superficial, if not injurious; or it is too high, and they cannot attain unto it. It gives nothing to the aspiration or the want of childhood, while the set talk with children is hard and forced, a talking *at* them, rather than a talking with them,—a forcing your convictions, rather than drawing out theirs. Sometimes it seems as if the staple of home intercourse were a tirade against noise, carelessness, and the thousand vexatious inadvertencies of child-life, and as if that would be all the memory of home intercourse the child would have to carry with it into the world.

I remember to have marked in a book I read some years ago the following passage: "It had grown to be an unhappy instinct with me to get as much as possible out of my father's way." Unhappy indeed; and what a strange statement it would seem, did we not know that this grows to be the instinct of too many children. How often do you see that the mother is the exclusive friend, companion, and confidante, while the father is a sort of bugbear, who is not to be approached or disturbed, whose presence is

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a restraint, whose departure a relief. This is not the mother's doing, or the child's. The fault lies with the father. His child is a plaything to him. As soon as he tires of his toy, it ceases to give him that sort of pleasure; as soon as it grows disagreeable, he begins to chafe, and hands it over to the mother. The repulse is understood, and works its natural result. The child shuns the father, makes the mother confidante, learns to persuade her, and gets her to persuade the father, and each time he gains his end the separation is more complete. This is not nature's doing. Nature draws the child, undoubtedly, toward the mother, but she does not draw it from the father. It looks to her, goes to her for some things; but where there is a true relationship, it soon comprehends that there are wants she cannot meet. Her more confiding ways, her more genial sympathies, — nay, let us go back to the great truth at once, — that mystic tie which links from the first and forever the child-life and the mother-life, give her the place the father never gets; but as childhood passes, and new experiences press, and life is out of doors, and school and other children make their impression, then more and more the boy, at least, feels the need of the father. Fatal is the mistake that father makes who in these years separates himself more and more from his children, and fearfully shall it be visited upon him in the

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non-intercourse of life, or in the days of his decrepitude and need. I sometimes hear of parents turned to the cold charities of almshouses; sometimes, pitiful complaints of children's ingratitude. But, alas! how little has many a child to be grateful for, who repays with a simple usury the cool indifference or the harsh neglect of his earlier years.

As another law of home intercouse, I should say, not only have, and show that you have, confidence in your children, but give your confidence to them. I think as children grow into years they desire to have their confidence reciprocated, and I suspect parents would gain very much if they now and then took their children, even while they are children, into their confidence. That is a very proud moment in a girl's life when her father first draws her arm into his, and she feels herself for the moment in that position she has always considered as sacred to her mother; that is an epoch in a boy's life when he finds his mother trusting to him as escort and protector, but a more pure and genuine and wholesome pride is that which the first confidence engenders. It is the letting down of many bars, it is the drawing of two who need each other very near, nearer than many a direct act. I well remember the effect of such confidence upon my boyhood, how it drew me toward my father, and how he trusted me, asked and took my advice, explained

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his purpose, and left me to work it out. I allude to this, because I think it an important thing in domestic intercourse, which is not apt to be thought of, but which will help to cement and bind parents and children just at that dangerous transition season when they are outgrowing the tutelage of childhood and putting on the self-sufficiency of youth. There are coming up every now and then in households matters which excite the curiosity of children, which we exalt into mysteries by our secrecy or evasion. There are very many matters upon which a growing child is capable of expressing an opinion, there are many things in which your boy or your girl can help you if you only think so; and it were far better for both you and them to put confidence in them, than that they should feel that they are passed by for others. Your own child is not unfrequently a better adviser than a stranger of twice his years and general wisdom; and if he were not, the mere showing of a disposition to trust him in your affairs is a valuable aid to the strengthening of his character, and the establishment of a just self-respect. We err greatly, and ourselves we lose much, by not leaning more on the generation that rises about us. I think this may be the one thing that youth wants at that dangerous transition season, — that neutral ground between childhood and manhood, — to prevent its running

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from the control of home to those scenes and companionships more dangerous, but which pay the coveted respect to its advancing years. What is, perhaps, the cunning of the world, should be the wisdom of the parent. It is not policy alone, but the mutual good of each, that should lead parents to give their confidence to their children. If they have that, they are far less likely to crave that which is less.

Let me suggest here, that no parent should, from false pride, or for any other cause, neglect to confess to the child when he has done him an injustice. Running through all the family should be the broadest principle of justice. It should rule in the dealings of child with child, nor less in the parental dealings. It is not possible for us to be infallible, quick, arbitrary, impulsive as we are. Judging from passion or insufficient inquiry, we many times mistake, and even when we would not we sometimes err. That mistake should be confessed at any cost. It will never do to let your child feel that you are unjust to it. It is inflicting a deep wound among sensibilities that cannot bear it. And think not your child will not appreciate your confession, and love you the more dearly for it. Have you never seen the surly and half vengeful look give way before the confession, "I have wronged you, my child," or found a sudden flashing of joy through the swiftly raining tears as the words fell

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from your lips? I tell you, the man who will do thus gains his child, keeps his love, and increases his respect, and saves a spirit which might be lost. As a young man I felt the position of the College government, which would never allow that it was wrong was doing a moral injury to myself and others, for which no mere learning could compensate. How much deeper the injury inflicted upon him who feels that it is a father or a mother who has injured, and refuses to right him! What is injurious in an institution would be fatal in a home, and the parent who should refuse to own to his child that he was in the wrong, would find that he had planted a seed which must inevitably grow and spread and bring forth much and bitter fruit.

Another law of home intercourse is courtesy. Good manners and kind feelings should not be company graces, but home graces. Again I say, there is no inherent power in the constitution of home that enables it to stand up against abuses. Most of all places does it depend upon what some one calls "the small, sweet charities;" least of all can it do without those common civilities which are prized so highly in the transient intercourse of life. Coleridge says, "The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions, the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss or a smile, a kind look, a heart-felt compliment, and the countless

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infinitesimals of pleasurable thoughts and genial feeling." These are just the things of almost infinite value in home intercourse, and these are the things home intercourse wants. What need is there of courtesy at home? Why should I stop to be polite to those I am with all the time? They ought to know that I feel kindly toward them, to take that for granted, and not to mind the little oversights in manner and act. But home cannot do this. Its life rests upon little things. Because it knows your love, it demands the expression of it, and when that expression goes out spontaneously to others, it cannot but sigh. The heart is always a little jealous, and we must have a care that we do not unwittingly rouse its fiercer fires. Besides, I think the decay of courtesy in families, the absence of ordinary civility toward each other, the suspension of little charities, is something worse than a carelessness. It is the beginning of an end which it is terrible to contemplate. Intermit the pleasant interchanges of the heart, be polite and considerate to strangers, and in your home leave every one to themselves; admire and pay court to every woman but your wife; listen to and adopt the opinion of every man except your husband; leave your sisters to fight their way, while you flirt with other girls; or lavish your amiability and your accomplishments upon all except your brothers; in short,

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be known in the home for the reverse of what the world thinks you, and home is little more than a name, and verges fast toward a ruin. If we treated others as we treat each other in a family; if we were as exacting, as unreasonable, as imperious; if we received every thing as our right, and gave nothing but with grudging; if kind words and looks, and generous acts and sympathies, were wanting, we should be shut from its society, and left outcast, until penance fit had been made, and pardon sought. Cowardly we compel home to submit to affronts we dare not put upon the world. The unselfish heart is of necessity courteous.

It may seem strange to you that I should add to this catalogue, as a part of the intercourse of home, the necessity in the home of seclusion. When we get to build our houses rightly and religiously, so that they shall not be mere physical conveniences, but educators of the souls within them, then we shall build them with regard to the sometime seclusion of the members from each other. We not only need to be shut out from other families, but the members of the same family require means of seclusion from each other. It is not safe or healthy, morally, for a family to live always in common. There must be some place to which each can withdraw, sacred from all intruding steps as was the Jewish inner sanctuary; a place to go to for the chastising of a perturbed tem-

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per; for reflection upon our mistakes, imprudence, or unkindness; for self-study, resolve, and prayers. In the varied and intimate intercourse of the home, perpetually do we need to pause, to withdraw, to think, and get strength; and one great preventive of a firm inner growth is, that we are obliged to postpone acts and exercises to a convenient season, whose vitality depends upon being embraced at the moment. We need to seize moods of mind, to use hints as they arise, to follow out the suggestings of circumstance or the moment, and we cannot do this unless we have some place in the house which is all our own to which to retire unmolested. The idea of the chapel and the oratory might with advantage be borrowed from the Romish Church, and the home receive some decided advantage, not from fasts and flagellations and counted beads, but from the sincere humiliation of the soul at such times as come to us all, when it is perturbed by the intercourse of home. The closet ought not to be a fiction of our rhetoric, but a fact of our homes and our experience.

In the home intercourse it should be remembered that each one has his place and his part. A happy and pleasant home is an impossibility where any one slights his duty. Home is not a place where you are to cosset your own fancies, or be entertained by the rest. You have no right to sit down, listless and dull,

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and say, "Come, amuse me, and see how pleasant you can make home." You have no right to complain that home is ungenial, till you are sure you have tried your best to make it genial. The men who complain of homes are mostly those of whom the homes complain, men whose dignity is offended at the bare suggestion that they have something to do toward making it pleasant. Home is not a mere place of entertainment, a sort of tavern, and he who turns to it for entertainment merely deserves to be disappointed. Hast thou nothing to do, O man! but to throw thyself upon a sofa, or monopolize the easiest chair, and, holding back all thine own information, demand that wife and children amuse thee? or wilt thou go moodily out to club or to store, declaring that thou wilt not stay where so little is done for thee? And shall the young man say, "My sisters do nothing to make home pleasant to me," when he has done nothing to make home pleasant to them? I do not think the different members of a home realize how much the pleasant, profitable intercourse of home depends on each, or how hard it is when one and another hang back for the rest to supply the deficiency.

I feel that we are not doing justice to the great privilege of domestic intercourse, that we are not making the best of our homes, that we who are parents are strangers to our children, and our children

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are strangers to us. Perhaps we husbands and wives are strangers to each other. We do not try to know each other. We let things take their own course, we have no guiding or controlling law, and then wonder that our homes are the unsatisfactory, chaotic things they are. Home, like a delicate, sensitive, many-stringed instrument, can only be kept in perfect tone by constant care. Without that, the exquisite harmonies of which it is capable become only clashing and horrid discords, — the jangle of a thing abused and broken. The homes that are bright, happy, and successful are not the special gifts of God, they are not homes endowed with the things position or wealth give, but they are homes wisely regulated, based upon, and growing out of, broad and generous principles. They are homes in which self is subordinate, in which familiarity has led to no abridgment of courtesy, where there is enough, and not too much of discipline, where children and parents grow together, sharing in each other's confidence, partaking in each other's sorrow or joy. I think the idea of home should be a place to grow in, — parents as well as children. It should have progress, this year better than last year; it should have renewal, so that the mistakes of the past may be avoided, and the future lead to something better; it should have a plan, because without plan nothing is ever done. And all this lies in parental

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hands. By special Divine enactment they are the educators of the home, — to lead it and to mould it. Its success or its failure rests with them. Except in very rare cases, the home cannot be higher than the aspiration of its heads. Then with them there rests a vast responsibility. With the first formation of the family it begins. It is not the mother's work alone, because her life chances to be more immediately and at all times connected with the home, but quite as much the father's. He ought to begin at the beginning, and know his children, not as playthings, not as disturbers of his peace, not as expenses, but, from their very babyhood up to the time he dismisses them to the world, as moral and immortal beings, whose destiny in the present, if not the future, he may and does control. He ought never to dissociate himself from the interests of his children, but by word and work prove his interest and sympathy in their experiences, their achievements, and their plans, — little things, perhaps, to do, but great things to leave undone. The intercourse of home is not the set, deliberate intercourse of the lips alone, — it is not the great things we attempt merely, but mainly that intercourse is among trivial and occasional things, and out of these, — these which we cannot anticipate, which we do not create, — comes the power of that intercourse, a power that may lift the home to heaven, or thrust it down

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to hell. Tacitus said of Agricola, "that he governed his family, which many find to be a harder task than to govern a province." It is not government of that old Roman stamp that we wish to have as the result of parental intercourse, — the exercise and control of mere will, — but the government which results from a wise, considerate, intelligent, and impartial love.

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IV.

HOME INFLUENCES.

I HAVE now a few words to say of those subtile influences — more potent and more delicate than any authority or power — which have so much to do with shaping the character and controlling the destiny of home. They are things which may not be catalogued or accurately defined; but, undefinable, nameless, innumerable, they are always at work upon the heart, and always accomplishing results vast, important, and lasting. We outgrow, we set aside, other control; other influences are partial and transient, — imperative to-day, to-morrow they have yielded, — but the influences of the home of our childhood are felt in the home of our maturity, in the small as in the great, in conduct and character and faith. Do we not know this from our own consciousness, has not the experience of life repeated and re-repeated the fact; and is it not evident that our children must carry with them out of their homes influences of some sort, as strong and as permanent as we took out of ours?

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A home — good or bad — is the result, not of authority, of direct, sharp, positive law, but of influence. I do not think this is generally understood. The aim of a parent is to establish authority, to make his *will* felt. The home is to have a rigid, inflexible law. That established, the matter of home rule is settled. The requirements and the falling off of each day is measured by that, and the fatal thing to have done is to have sinned against the *law* of the house. Now, as I have already said, law is essential to the well-being and development of the home; yet he who should suppose that a home is to be governed only by authority would make a very grave mistake. Authority is limited. "It cannot modify dispositions, nor implant sentiments, nor alter character." It is an outside thing; he who is under it is never free from a certain feeling of constraint and subjection. It regulates actions only. It cannot reach opinions or affections. This is the work of influence, so that he who should rule by law, who should be watchful over, jealous only for, his authority, would fail in just that thing which he wished to do. He might compel his children to a little circle of prescribed duties, but he could never inspire them with the large sentiment of obedience, outrunning positive injunctions. What a home wants is domestic influences rather than laws. In the more complicated and artificial relations of so-

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ciety we must have authority. Without law, exact and absolute, there is no safety. But in the home, authority, in the sense in which the world uses it, authority as it is sought to be enforced in many homes, is not merely undesirable and inefficacious, but positively hurtful. One may not govern his home as he would a city, or a state, or a penitentiary. Just in proportion that it is attempted will the home fail. It is possible to have a thoroughly ordered household, drilled as admirably as the crack corps of a regiment, but that household is not a home. He is not a faithful and wise servant who establishes such a rule.

We may take a lesson both from nature and from revelation. The things in nature most forcible, most reliable, the things constant and resistless, are influences. It is not the shock of the earthquake, the force of the tornado, the sweep of the storm, to which she intrusts her various missions, terrific and immediate as they are in their effects, but to the dew, to the sun, to gravity, to electricity, which act noiselessly but continuously, whose power, exerted invisibly, we become conscious of only in results. So in revelation. God has displaced the old dispensation of authority by the new one of influence, reaching us not *through law*, but, as the word in its origin signifies, by the *flowing in* of his spirit of love and truth into our spirits. Law, authority, was of Moses, while grace

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and truth — not law and authority, but *influences*, subtile, invisible, irresistible powers — are of Jesus Christ. Just that wisdom which God selects for compassing his ends we should adopt in the carrying out of our own, and rule the little world God gives us as himself he rules the vast worlds of matter and of spirit.

We have all, probably, some vague idea of home influence; but of the momentous thing it is — to judge from what one sees — there can be very little just conception, while of the separate, individual influences which go to make up home influence and our connection with and responsibility for them, we seem very generally insensible. Of a few of the more obvious and direct of these only shall I undertake to speak, frankly confessing my inability to grapple with a subject whose height and depth and breadth no man may measure. To trace the origin, the compass, and the results of the influences of home would be to exhaust all history and biography, to run back to the first family, and through all families, and on to all the issues of eternity. Indeed, to trace the influences exerted by a single member of the home, through all their varied windings and effects, would baffle the keenest intellect and the broadest wisdom. Only the Infinite can do it.

I do not know that I could quite subscribe to the

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saying of Napoleon, that "the fate of the child is always the work of his mother," but no other person or thing has so much to do with the present and the future of a child as the mother, and this of necessity, and by the law of our being. It is said that children partake more largely in the characteristics of the mother than the father, her influence dating back beyond its conscious being, and we very well know that all the earlier influences of its life come from her. It is her smile that first arrests its wondering gaze, and calls out the first response of an intelligence it has awakened. Day by day, by look, caress, accent, endearment, she fashions its growing spirit; up through childhood she not merely leads its tottering steps, but guides its opening mind, and upon its facile being engraves her own mental and moral image. Consciously by precept and by word, unconsciously by manner and example, and in a myriad nameless, unrecognized ways she acts upon it, establishing herself within its being as the one guide and rule of life, the one mighty and resistless influence. "What my mother says," and "what my mother does," are the two great laws of earlier childhood, and you might as well attempt to reverse the decree of fate as convince it that what she says and does is other than the absolute truth and right. As childhood develops into boyhood or girlhood, still this supremacy is maintained; the father,

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even when faithful to his position, never attaining that first place God gave her, which only her folly or her sin can forfeit. Girlhood and boyhood pass. The old home is left, and the new begun. Away from old scenes and associations, restrained no longer, but altogether free, still you trace the mother's influence, to go down to children's children, blessing or cursing. In the home it chances often that the little seed unconsciously scattered by the wayside springs into luxuriance and life, and brings its hundred-fold of fruit, when that which is sown with care droops and dies, and He who can trace all things back unerringly to their first cause may see in some great virtue of to-day, or some huge crime, the inevitable consequence of some far back maternal influence.

As things are, the mother is the influence of the home, not by the decree of nature merely, but by the neglect of man. The child is left to the mother's care. It is trained, it is taught, it is watched by her. A double duty is hers; to that which God gave is added that which man shifts off upon her. As best she may, her womanly nature must supply his neglect, happy if she have only to contend against his negative influence. To the opening heart and mind she becomes, too often, the only parent, and with her rests the whole work of preparing her child for the grave encounters of life. That she does that work nobly

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how many of us can attest, with a courage, a self-denial, and a faith that enshrine her in our hearts, as never virgin or saint in the heart of any devotee. Love as we may other women, there stands first and ineffaceable the love of "*mother*"; gaze as we may on other faces, our mother's face is still the fairest; bend as we shall to other influences, still over all, silent but mighty, reaching to us from long gone years, is a mother's influence. The heart may be wayward at the time; tear, entreaty, the silent agony, all in vain; she may sink into her grave despairing, but these are not lost, no prayer, no counsel, no appeal. When tossing oceans separate, and other scenes distract; when years have rolled their steady increase, and care and toil and grief have joined to make the self-reliant man; when the green grass waves above her grave, — then, audible to the soul as when first spoken to the ear, come those neglected words, to strengthen and to save. In the mighty want of his soul, the prodigal hears his mother's voice, her hymn, her prayer, her precept; flashes over him in his riot a vision of her form kneeling by his bedside and teaching his innocence to pray. In upon scenes of sin and shame and license comes that pure, that holy, that all-loving presence. The wine-cup falls; the tempter is at bay. A little child in spirit, but a giant in a new-found strength, he dashes all away, and goes out into

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the world with new resolve and hope, to contend, not alone, against the perils which had wellnigh mastered him. Full many a time, just at the crisis hour, — you have known it, I have known it, — a long-forgotten word or look — a little waif floating down the tide of years — has borne the perilled soul into its safety. Do you remember that toast which was given in the camp of the 20th Massachusetts Regiment, last Thanksgiving day, — "*Our Mothers*"? Did not it, and the response made to it there, and wherever the knowledge of it went, speak, as no eloquence of language could, to the all-pervading, unquenchable influence of our mothers?

With all this wealth of power in a mother's influence, is it not often worse than wasted? How frivolously, indolently, selfishly, some mothers live, their children catching from them, in all their ways, the feeling that they are an encumbrance, somehow or other always standing in the way of their mother's comfort or enjoyment. In how many homes does a mother's intercourse with her children alternate between caressing indulgence and pettish fault-finding. In how many are the bodies pampered and dressed, children reduced to mere fireside ornaments to gratify a maternal vanity, while the affections are thwarted or starved, and all the higher possibilities of the mind and of the soul either uncultured or repulsed. Think

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of daughters left to grow as the chance intercourse of life determines, going from the home devoid of all a rtue mother gives. Think of sons sent into the temptations and seductions of the world, with none of the controlling, sanctifying influences of a mother's character, and looking back at her as one among the number of childhood's tyrants. The deepest sympathies of our nature are touched when we see a motherless child going orphaned into life; but how many motherless souls are there out in the world, battling unsuccessfully with its influences, who might have been saved through a mother's fidelity! What right have they to become mothers who neglect all a mother's highest duty?

Great as is the maternal responsibility, it must not be suffered to become the one absorbing and evident anxiety of life. That is an extreme to be equally avoided with the last. The bane of some homes is the too evident fear of the mother that she shall not do exactly right by her children. You see and you feel that she takes the responsibility of her position hardly, worries and grows old under it. Not only does it destroy her own comfort and happiness, but it exerts an unfavorable influence upon her children, defeats the very purpose she has in view. There should not be too much anxiety about results. The aim should be to do conscientiously all that one can, and

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leave the rest to God. The influence of one who never lays aside her maternal solicitude, who in that drops all nature out of her intercourse with her children, who irritates or repels them by the constant utterance of her doubts or fears, is terribly pernicious to them, whether they yield or rebel. The mistake lies in relying too little upon *influences*, and making too much of *coercion*. I think it were better that a mother should satisfy herself with influences, and mainly those influences that are indirect, than that she should attempt any thing like exact and determined government. If her own heart be right, her words the words of love and truth, and her character single and pure, in these lie her power, and by these she shall conquer. Let her lay aside the *too much* governing, *too much* talking, *too much* preaching, *too much* worrying; let her rule rather by her affections than her will, by her love rather than her law; let her trust to the silent influence of her life, and trust in the receptive power of her child. It is as easy to blunt the sensibilities of a child by the pressure of government, as it is by neglect. What some one has said of both the parents may be said to be specially true of the mother, — "When the parents' lives are genuine, noble, and *their own*, the children subside into their proper place," — and that subsiding, as I think, is better than coercion, which is always a small

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part of governing. To a mother worried and perplexed as to what she should do in order rightly to influence her children, some wise man made the answer, that "all they wanted was *a little wholesome neglect.*" It is an answer that, perhaps, we all need to ponder and observe.

Let me here say one earnest and solemn word of that class of mothers, created by the providence of God, called in our general intercourse *step-mothers.* I will speak out the word that is in me, though I give a chapter in my own experience, which only a sense of duty would lead me to unveil. I never knew my mother, — the young, and beautiful, and holy one so early called,— and the home and the influences of early childhood are to me a blank. Away at school, word came that I was to have a home, and my young heart yearned to be with him to whom I was growing up a stranger; but busy demons in human shape, with foul lies and fears, filled my young heart, and I swore never to give the name of mother to her who came to take my mother's place. When she came, I ran and hid myself away. I was found, but would not yield; and yet — I cannot tell you how, I never knew, no words were uttered — in a half-hour I was in that mother's lap, and had uttered the endearing word, and then and there began an influence to which mainly I owe all that I am or shall ever be. And I

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say here and now, that the falsest thing in a world of falsehoods is the common belief in the tyranny of step-mothers. To this most delicate and difficult position many a woman proves herself nobly true, her large and loving heart making up by prayer and struggle for that which nature has denied her. Tyrants, and mean and selfish, some such mothers are; but it is not the necessity of their relation, but because these are elements in their character to which their position offers the opportunity. How many homes are blessed, how many children led through the world and fitted for heaven, by those who, bearing the name of *mothers-in-law*, have proved themselves *mothers in love!*

Before quitting the subject of maternal influence, let me entreat every mother to guard against that too common and specious plea which says, "I am not wise, or learned, I have no tact, so I can have little influence." The mother who says that does not know her own heart, and has failed to realize that life's strongest influences are because of the affections. I grant that there are many who, through defect in early education, or their own after neglect, cannot do all that under other circumstances they might, but that should not prevent them from doing all that they can. Influence is a thing of the heart, not of the head. It matters not how poor, how ignorant, how humble the mother is; if she be worthy of the love

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of her children, she has over them a sway monarchs and tyrants never exercise. Have you not known sons who have grown great in the world, bowing still to the wisdom of the mother, turning from their wealth, their success, their fame, in reverence back to her, the humble dweller in an humble, distant home, laying their laurels at her feet, and gladly owning, as the cause and impulse of all success, those gentle influences by which she led their youth and formed their manhood? Mighty are the influences of the world, of man, of passion, of position, and they repel or drag men as they will; yet mightier than these, as the still small voice was mightier than the fire or the whirlwind, is the influence of a true mother's love. Never say you have no influence over your children, for if you *will not* lead them in the way of good, God will one day show you what has been your influence for evil. As I look back upon my own home, I should say of it, that its strongest influence was its silent and unconscious life. My mother's influence pervaded home as the delicate fragrance of some fair flower pervades the atmosphere of a room. You cannot see it, you cannot feel it, yet every breath you draw proclaims its presence and its power; it regale the sense and enters into the life. That influence was a presence in our home, a daily joy and beauty and power. Not by law, by will, but by love, it came;

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not by word, but by unconscious deeds. And so that life became, not merely influence, but inspiration, as the lives of all mothers should, not moulding to a present form, to a mere copy, but with a something of genius or divinity, urging the young soul on to bolder flights, and assuring it success. If mothers only knew what inspiration lies in the pure, loving deeps of their own nature, if they but knew the yearning, clinging love in their sons, at least, they would never fail in their duty or despair of their power.

I have placed the influence of the mother before the influence of the wife, because I believe it to be not only prior in point of time, but in itself more lasting and powerful. Next to it stands the influence of the wife, though there seem to be some, both husbands and wives, who doubt if there is any such thing. For one, I believe the influence of a wife to be always, for good or for bad, very decided. There is not a woman living, unless she have forfeited all claim to her husband's respect, but is making her mark day by day upon his character. We men are foolishly proud, and do not like to let the women see how they influence us, but we know that, outside of our business, — and sometimes even in it, — all our doings are more or less controlled by our wives, and he is a knave who will not honestly own it. Is it a disgrace to a man that he is kept at home, away from bad company,

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away from doubtful pleasures and foolish expense, through his wife's influence? Some poor, cowardly souls think so, and utter senseless cries against her who, as a guardian angel, stands between these and their victim. I think the wife was given to man to supply him with certain things wanting in his own nature, and in yielding to her judgment, her opinion, her desire — where these are on the side of truth and justice — he only follows out the leading of a Divine will. But though the husband hide it or deny it, let the good wife be of good cheer. One thing, however, let her understand, — worrying, fretting, fault-finding, direct and frequent harangues, ill-tempered slurs, any thing that looks like passion, suspicion, or jealousy, will do no good. These are things a man cannot bear, and have driven many into the thing they were intended to prevent. She lacks judgment and prudence who shall ever indulge in these. Let her know that the strongest influences are those which are silent and indirect, that it is impossible for her to be in the right, gently, patiently, consistently, without its being felt. It may not be acknowledged to-day, or to-morrow, or ever; it may not do all that she hoped it would do. Counteracting influences may be too strong for that, but it is felt among the deepest and the last things of life, even when he jeers and scoffs and strikes. Women little know how much the des-

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tiny of man rests with them. Alas that there should be so many foolish and selfish and weak and indolent, — angels of darkness rather than angels of light!

Next in a home, too little believed in and too little exercised, is a sister's influence. I am glad to say that I believe in that as a fact, not as a thing of fiction, or as obsolete. I do not think sisters have much cause for believing in it, or much encouragement for exercising it, nor am I much surprised at their saying that there is no use in their trying to do any thing for their brothers. Perhaps none of the relations of the home has been more generally and deliberately neglected than this, till the brother and sister life in the home flow on side by side in two separate and well-defined channels, instead of in one full, confluent stream. There is not true harmony in a home until the mutual dependence and influence of the two is recognized. I know that sisters have great influence over their brothers, though the abominable pride of our growing boys prevents their suspecting it. It is true they laugh at them, they won't listen to what they say, — half the time won't speak to them when some other girl is about whom they admire; but if the sister have any genuine character, and the boy a genuine heart, she may rest secure of her power. She, too, must remember that any thing like compulsion — especially if exercised in the presence of other

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boys or girls — will be fatal to her influence. Sisters may, by the silent, imperceptible influence of daily character and life, imbue brothers with the noblest impulses and aims. Let them be content with that, rousing no suspicions by evident attempts or by expressed purpose, turning into a rebel him who would otherwise willingly be led.

I fear there are too few sisters capable of exerting this high influence, too few conscious of their power and their responsibility. In too many homes brothers are influenced for evil by their sisters. They have not the high, womanly principle that belongs to their sex, the keen, quick, delicate sense of truth and right and justice, the pure, unselfish, broad, and generous love that belongs to their nature, the untainted and virgin modesty which God gives, but the artificial sanctions and restraints of custom, which confound and dim. Prime movers in deep and lasting mischief are sisters sometimes, from whose sentiments and conduct brothers take their cue. The propriety which a young man sees his sister disregard, the flippant sentiment he hears her utter or approve, the doubtful fashion which he sees her adopt, all go to make the home atmosphere in which he daily grows. Not by deliberate example does she lead him astray, but by what he perceives to be the tendency of her word and act. While I know brothers, coming into the world

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in the unqualified integrity and grace of manhood, *made* by their sisters, while I know those who have been influenced to their salvation by them, there are those who have been encouraged, if not led on, by their sisters to their ruin, — young men who are saying, "If only my sisters had showed and made me love virtue, if only they had dropped their senseless love of pleasure and of self, and given me the model of pure womanhood, how different might have been my fate." Now let the young woman forget that such as he finds his sisters to be, such does he believe all young women are, and what a libel to her sex, and what a life-long injury to her brother, may one heartless and selfish sister be!

If I have dwelt somewhat at length upon the feminine influences of the home, it is because home is the peculiar sphere of woman. With the world at large she has little to do. Her influence begins, centres, and ends in her home.

Of the influence of sister upon sister, of the daughter and the son upon their parents, of the brother upon the brother and the sister, of the husband upon the wife, much might be said, and should be said, in order to any thing like a complete view of home influences; but I must content myself with one or two brief remarks upon the influence of the father.

If it be true that the child inherits more largely

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from the mother nature than the father, if it be true that there are certain qualities essential to true manhood which the mother cannot understand or evoke, and if the whole matter of early culture and influence in the plastic days of childhood is left in her hands, must it not follow that the race is, little by little, but inevitably, losing the prestige of perfect manliness? To the true developing of the man certain womanly influences are essential, but only in their just proportion. The absence of that which is manly must necessarily seriously affect the condition and prospects of the race. Not only, then, is the father who leaves the things of home wholly to the mother doing an immediate wrong to his child, but a remote injury to posterity, — a thing we care too little about. We ought to do something for the race, — at least we should do nothing against it.

Every father should understand that every home has its guiding principle, shaping and determining it, which it derives from him. The mother influence is, as we say, passive, and too often overlaid by that which is more immediately attractive. More obvious and superficial in itself, the father's guiding principle becomes the law of the house, and leaves upon it an impress indelible and deep. Take a man of large and liberal sentiments and sympathies, of clear moral vision and real charity, all whose views are broad

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and noble, all whose ways are honest and upright, who makes the world the wide theatre for the exercise of virtue, and life the means of growth and faith; — is not that man felt in his home, through and through? and the great, underlying principle of his life, is it not the corner-stone of the home life? Take a man whose talk is only of business, of values, of money, whose thought is of markets and of trade, whose domestic intercourse is pitched to the same key that his world intercourse is. His children catch it: their thoughts, hopes, talk, are in harmony. A discerning ear detects in them the home-pitch; from your knowledge of the child, you know the father's tone at home. The child is broad or narrow, soars or delves, according as the principle of the home is. The thing the child hears, the thing he sees, the thing he detects, are the influences in his life. And we do not think enough of what the child detects. A friend of mine said to another, — a man moving among the fashions and conventions of life, and governing himself and his household by them, — after his son had gone out, upon whom he had been endeavoring to inculcate a moral principle he did not himself practise, "That boy will find you out." Yes, and what a terrible finding out is this, all through the world, of parental inconsistencies and shams, that stand out livid and stark to the pure eye of childhood, notwithstanding

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the fancied security of our disguise! And what shall prevent children, who have found moralities only the convenient coin of outside intercourse, from becoming hypocrites, and sycophants, and infidel? Let the father remember, that it is deeds, not words, which influence children; that they are quick to detect inconsistencies; that these at first create confusion, then excite suspicion, then lead to doubt, and perhaps end in making the child an accomplished knave or villain, a result which the parent fails to recognize as the culminating of his own depraving influence. As the Scripture says, in warning to the sinner, "Be sure your sin will find you out," so may we say to the father, "Be sure your child will find you out;" for every child, at some time, sits in judgment upon parental character, and woe to him who cannot stand before it!

From the long catalogue of special influences which enter into the life of home I shall select but two, and say a single word of each.

From whatever other source flattery may come, never let it come from the home. Do not stoop to be the base pander to one of the lowest cravings of our lesser nature. Praise where praise is due, with wisdom, discrimination, caution, but of flattery, which "has ever something of the lie in it," never let there be any between the inmates of the home. Beauty, grace,

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talent, accomplishment, are sure to have it in the world. That penalty must they pay there, that gauntlet must they run; but do not sully home with the presence of a thing so low and grovelling. I have known families which were nothing more than mutual-admiration societies, — parents flattering children, children flattering parents, brother repaying sister with usury. I have known parents sowing the seeds of a heart-corroding vanity, turning the gift of nature or the gain of art into the mere means of admiration and parade. And you all know what a upas-tree is that vanity planted and fostered under parental influence!

Beside this, we should be very jealous of the influence we import into our homes, — the books, the visitors, the opinions, the customs, — things which get the more power from being connected with our homes. Many of these, if we met them casually, or judged them by their own merits, would have little or no influence upon us; but finding them at home, recognized and welcome, they assume a new aspect, acquire importance, and become dangerous. The home should be carefully guarded against the intrusion of those things to which only its sanction gives value and influence.

There are, beside, outside social influences pressing with more or less constancy and importunacy upon the home, modifying its arrangements, its purpose, and

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its discipline. Inevitably the home is influenced by social surroundings, depressed or elevated by the tone of sentiment outside. We cannot so isolate our home as to be free. We are social as well as domestic creatures, and social influences will make their way into our homes. If they are good in themselves and elevating, they should be welcomed and cherished; if bad, watched and shunned. It is not altogether a misfortune that there is this outside influence. Few but may gain from an infusion of some other life into them; few but may be the wiser and the stronger from resisting what they cannot approve. I know it is a difficult thing when growing children come, desiring this or that liberty or possession which is granted in some other home, when they complain of your strictness where other homes are lax, or get infatuated with styles and modes unlike their own; and I know no other way than to face wisely and calmly each separate case, compromise where no principle is at stake, yield something to the spirit of young life and the changes of habit and custom, and stand as a rock where conscience and duty bid.

Let me, in conclusion, say, that I by no means suppose the success or the failure of its inmates to depend entirely upon the influences of home. All virtue does not spring from these: all vice does not. God has other potent educators, and sometimes they rise against

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the influences there, and sweep them as with a spring torrent all away. Good children bless bad parents; bad children curse good parents. Dens of infamy and vice are recruited from pious homes. Why and how this should be we cannot say, but it is just often enough to make us watchful and in earnest, knowing as we well do that these are after all but exceptional, and that the great law is, *As the home is, so is the man.* We are not to be troubled or in despair. Give your children good principles, enforced by your own holy lives. Let the influences of home be all pure and good. Then dismiss your children to the care of God.

Who, then, is the faithful and wise householder? He who makes less of government than of influence, who hedges his home about with every thing that can purify and elevate, who is felt in it less by word than by example, who makes it his great work to broaden its sympathies, strengthen its integrity, and elevate its aim; in whom no gross inconsistency between word and deed shocks the moral sense or blunts the moral sensibility of childhood, who makes of home that field of God he will sow and till, watching and choking the springing tares, cherishing and garnering the wheat. How few such householders there are! Amid the many waning things — things which we attach to the past rather than the present — is home influence.

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Perhaps there are many reasons for it. One to me is not fanciful, but real. Advancing civilization, mistaken economy, have abolished the *hearthstone*. Our homes have no fireplaces, and no one domestic centre. If we have gained economically and physically, we have lost morally. There is no centre of sympathy and of converse now. You cannot make a room with a stove or a furnace like a room with an open fire, nor is the drawing around a hole in the floor or the gazing at a black iron cylinder like the fondly remembered circle around the blazing fire. When the fire went out upon the hearth, there went with it one of the strongest and healthiest influences of home. May a better civilization, and a truer economy, and a juster sense of comfort combine to restore it, and with it may there come again a troup of wholesome influences, banished from our homes, but not forgotten in our memories, influences unconsciously forming the habits and lives of even the youngest sitter there, influences which, subtracted from our lives, would leave a painful void, influences we seek in vain in other ways, by other means, to supply to our children.

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V.

EVENINGS AT HOME.

SACRED TO the home before all other portions of the day is the evening. The morning comes with its demand for labor. Before us lie our varied tasks. Over our first waking moments there is a shade of anxiety, as involuntarily the day's probable demands or accurately-determined duties rise before us. The morning, too, is the signal for separation. Life is awake again, and we must be at work. Business, domestic detail, the school, call us at once from the home, and till the sun goes down we are scattered — children of the dispersion — in our separate spheres, busy in that thing which is our first and prominent duty. There is no home again until

> "The world's comforter, with weary gait,
> His day's hot task has ended in the west."

That is the glad signal for reunion; and, converging toward the one common centre, with weary bodies or jaded brains, tired of work, tired of play, but with

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fresh hearts, come parents and children, brothers and sisters, to forget toil and study and care in the calm and happy life of home. The evening lamp shines out far into the gathering darkness, the welcome beacon to the father's step. The world has treated him hard to-day. He has met repulse from friendship, disappointment or reverse in business, his well-laid schemes have failed. Baffled, thwarted, that clear and steady light, detected and kept separate among all others, dissolves the gloom, lifts off the burden, and the world's chill power vanishes before the magic thought of home. No longer laggard, with rapid tread he hastens on. And now against the window-pane, peering into the gathering gloom, he sees a well-known face, and then the sudden vanishing tells him that quick-eared love has caught a welcome sound. With hand upon the latch, one moment he pauses ere he will make the vision real, one moment, as the patter of little feet and the joyous crowing of the baby-voice send their love-tones vibrating through his soul, and then, — the world shut out, care and struggle, coldness and failure, forgotten till the morrow, — circled and embraced by those who love him best and love him always, he gives himself over to pleasures and duties that await him there. Nor less the wife rejoices. All day long, amid perplexities he little knows and for which he allows too little, she has

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toiled and moiled to make that home which to the husband looks so bright. What contriving, what experiment, what puzzle, what economy, what patience with her children, what drilling of domestics, what tact, what courage, what virtue, — only woman's, — to make of these chaotic and contending materials the harmony he finds. To her, evening comes as a solace and relief. She feels its calm, the luxury of its repose. With her, too, care sleeps till the morrow, and the evening meal and the evening converse shall have no shade. Ye who selfishly carry your day-burden with you over the threshold of home, dragging remorselessly into its presence that which has no place there, — ye in whom the quick glance of the husband detects the tokens of inward disturbance, — let me beg you to remember that what is best for each to share with the other of the day's care may well be adjourned a little, while you may not adjourn the expressions of gladness and love which mean most at the first moment of meeting, and, like all first impressions, are apt to have permanent influence. The cloud that lowers over the meeting may spread into darkness and storm ere night be come. Drop your day-burdens at the moment of your meeting; let, at least, a brief self-forgetfulness overtake those who really love each other, in presence of God's best earthly gift, and the heart's truest earthly treasure, *Home!*

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Not only the first meeting after the day is over should be a matter of thought and of care, but the whole subject of evening should receive serious attention from those who are as heads to the home. Situated as most of us are, the evening affords us all of home-life we have. It is the only time when the circle can be complete, the only opportunity for that interchange of thought and influence so invaluable to the character. It must not be suffered to waste under our indolence or indulgence. It must not be left to chance for its improvement, or squandered in a cigar, a newspaper, or the mending of old clothes. It must not be a fret and a worry till the children are in bed, and then a fret and a worry till you are there too. To the evening, and specially the winter's evening, belong mainly the influences of domestic life. Its few short hours are all the uninterrupted time we have at our disposal to know our own or be known of them. The impression that home leaves upon the child comes mainly from its evenings. The visions which memory delights in conjuring are the old scenes about the evening fire or the evening lamp. Mother and father as they were then are the mother and father we know, and the lessons we then received are the best and most permanent in life.

If it were not for the evening, what would home-life be to-day? Is it not the *little all* that there is

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left of it? Are there not some of us who for months scarcely see our children by daylight, and did we not all see, a year or two ago, that a father did not know his own child, — an infant of six months, — whom his wife had caused to be left in a basket at the door? Ought we not to bless God that, overworked in a world to whose exactings we consecrate ourselves, there comes in mercy the evening, as a silver clasp binding together the day and the night? Ought we not to have a care that it be kept bright and pure, sullied by no ill-doing or neglect? Not so holy and beautiful is the evening without, when moon and stars in all their quiet glory glisten in the sky, as evening within, where human hearts beat true, and the hours are sacred to the developing of the best home good. This can only be through care and effort. Only on conditions does God grant any success or joy. Home is not given, but made.

When the man has once entered the home, there he should remain, as a general thing, until the duties of the morrow call him away. I say, as a general thing, for one has duties as a citizen and a neighbor which should not be omitted, and there are opportunities of instruction, amusement, not to be wholly foregone. Shut up exclusively to home, men and women become narrow and selfish in their views and aims and sympathies; themselves and their children suffer.

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The evening at home, however, is to be the rule, and the evening abroad the exception.

Is it not a fact, that the evening at home is the rare thing in some men's lives? There was something more than satire in that anecdote of the man who complained that, now he was married, he had nowhere to spend his evenings. Before a woman is your wife, you know very well, and she knows, where you spend your evenings. After that, you may know, but she does not. The first suspicion many a woman has of the waning of the honeymoon is in the absence of her husband in the evening, and the fact in many homes is, that the husband and father has no place in the evening circle, and no influence there. A hasty supper swallowed — not eaten — in silence or complaint, the coat and hat are resumed. The door is opened, closed, and the husband gone, without a sign to show that home has any place in his affections. She who at first remonstrated has long since ceased even to sigh, and takes with a patient resignation that which she finds is inevitably her lot. Even the children evince no disappointment, and the door shuts out a man who goes to the street, the club, the secret meeting, oblivious of the obligations he voluntarily assumed when he became a husband and a parent, — a man whose care for home is, that it have food, fuel, and shelter, and his demand of it, that it do not trouble

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him. Is there not many such a husband and many such a home? I know wives are not always angels. I know that even our own children are not always cherubs. I know home does not always smile and welcome, it is not always neat and cheery; but do you never, *if you are a man*, abandon or complain of it until you have tried to the uttermost your skill upon it. It is a mean and cowardly thing in a man to turn his back upon a home in which he has never been known as an earnest and sympathetic coadjutor and friend.

So far as it is possible, I should say that the evening should not only be spent at home by the various members of the family, but that they should spend it together. Simply to be *at home* does not answer the home requirement. To be thoughtlessly or selfishly absorbed in one's own special pursuit, absent or apart from the home circle, is not discharging the duty. To be in the house is not to be in the home. Some men always do a certain class of writing at home, shut up by themselves, or, if with the family, compelling it to silence and restraint. Go to their places of business, and you cannot see why this need be. Very few men have their time so wholly absorbed as to be compelled to rob home in this way. There are intervals of leisure in the busiest day. Men are far from busy the whole time they are at their places of busi-

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ness, and it must but rarely occur that a man determined upon an unoccupied evening at home shall find it impossible. Others have a definite home employment, some pursuit aside from the calling of life, — very well, very honorable, but not to obliterate the duties of home. Others — especially the growing children — have separate rooms and establishments, in which, with books or work, the evening is spent. The evening life of the home should be a life in common. What a glee is there in young voices and young hearts when the lamps are lighted! How eagerly they gather about the table, wheeling up father's chair, bringing out mother's basket, each settling to his place, happy, busy, and joyous; while the talk, the story, the book, the game, employ the sparkling hours, and sow the seed of never-ending, ever-pure delight. Some one, speaking of the past, says, "We remember little of father and mother except what they were about the cheerful fire; the hearth-stone is the pedestal of their images, and the serene glow of the evening light upon their faces is the favorite picture which the mind cherishes." Since we have banished that sacred thing, "the fireplace," we have only the centre-table and the lamp as the holy centre of our homes. Never may that central lamp be dimmed, nor at that table one seat of parent or of child vainly waiting to be filled!

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As children grow out of the early ways and hours of childhood, one of the gravest parental duties presents itself. It is the furnishing of pleasant occupation for the evening hours. Easy enough it is when the little things are to be turned off with a toss and a kiss, and after a brief frolic, tired and sleepy, go to their beds, and leave the evening free to the elders for their own employments. But very different is it as boys and girls begin to grow, at first straining every nerve to prove that they can sit up a little later, and then, when they have gained their point, beginning to cry, "O dear, what shall I do!" This is a very important moment in life for the child and for the parent, and according as it is met will largely depend the issues of home.

The great difficulty is to know what to do with the boys. The girls are more easily controlled, because there are sedentary pursuits and household occupations to which they are used. From nature they take to in-door life. Inclination and habit lead them toward, rather than from home. With the boy it is different. His first manliness is asserted in his demand to go out and play in the evening, and in the permission begins a host of evils without name or number, — evils most pernicious to the individual, the home, and society at large. I do not know a single good result that by remotest possibility can result from allowing boys in

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the street at night, and I could not name the sins and crimes which have been traced back to it. Go on to the main street of any considerable town or village in an evening. There you may see and hear, under its most favorable aspect, what goes on when boys are out at night, — rudeness and noise, vulgarity and profanity, that would start a blush upon the cheek of many an older sinner, and do send many of us shuddering on our way; and just this same thing happens wherever boys are thus suffered to run at large. Why shouldn't it? What is there to prevent? Darkness favors that which could not face the day, and many a boy becomes hopelessly depraved under its cover, who would go free if only his exposures were those of daylight. There are sins which, like foul birds, rejoice only in the night; and in dank dells, unvisited by sunshine, the poison-flower exhales its baleful breath. You wonder that your boys get such manners, grow so unruly at home, become indifferent to you and callous to every good impression. You marvel that they have learned to smoke and swear; you are shocked when you find that they have begun to gamble and to drink; you cannot understand these nightly fires, these street and store and house robberies, and the many other deeper crimes; and yet the prime cause lies just by, where you do not suspect it, — in the loosing your boys into

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the streets in the evening, because they want to go, and you do not know what else to do with them. I know how it is, — for I have been a son, and I am a father, and have already had to meet my own son on this point, — and I know, too, that it is not easy to satisfy a child of your greater kindness in your seeming injustice. But I would sooner put my boy into the cage of maddened serpents and beasts, than send him out from his home nightly, I know not where nor to what. At best, they could but kill his body; but the street at night, — after it has killed the body, it has the power to cast the soul into hell! The ranks of the drunkard, the thief, the incendiary, the murderer, are recruited from the street.

But it is of no use for you to tell your boys to stay at home, or compel them to do it, unless you are going to do so yourself. No boy will treat a home otherwise than as he sees his father treat it. He may stay in because he must; but you may be sure that he will pant for the time when he shall be his own man, and do as father does, not as he says; you may be sure that he will grow up with no desire to form a home of his own, or will form one merely as a selfish convenience. The home you make for him will be his ideal of home when he comes to fashion one for himself.

Here, too, let me say that I feel that many parents,

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who in many respects are just to their home duties, err in "going out" too much. They are too easily and too often tempted away from their homes, by things innocent enough in themselves, which yet, as conflicting with parental duty, they should deny themselves. There may be no harm, now and then, in leaving the child to be put to bed by a faithful domestic; but what a homesick feeling lies upon that little heart as it lays its head upon its pillow, with no sweet good-night kiss, and the childish prayer unsaid! There are many graver trials, as we men judge, but we have forgotten our own child-heart when we think so. The question coming nightly from a little crib I know is, "Good-night; *are you going out?*" — and never any thing but duty compels the answer, "Yes." There may be no harm, now and then, in leaving the older children to themselves for the evening. They may learn self-restraint and self-reliance so; but when this is repeated and re-repeated for no good cause, — when children see parents greedily seizing any pretext to get away from home, allowing some selfish desire to get the better of their duty, — when they find themselves second, and other things always first, a serious and lasting evil is inflicted upon the home. The constant and needless "*going out*" of parents is an example and an influence they shall in vain endeavor by other things to counteract. It leaves an impres-

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sion on the memory unfavorable to the child, unfavorable to its future home. All honor to them that stay by the house for the sake of the children; and blessed the children whose evenings are made happy by the genial, it may be self-denying, companionship of father and mother.

The mere staying at home, however, is not enough. The negative influence of your presence is not what your children want, but the positive influence of your interest. They want to feel your sympathy, and to know that you and they have but a single purpose for the time. What good does your sitting with them do, if they see you absorbed in your own affairs, noticing them only as in some way they interfere with or disturb you? The father and mother who are only a restraint upon their children add nothing to a home evening. They must do something directly and systematically for their children. I insist upon it, that we err in not thoughtfully and seriously planning for the profit or the pleasure of our children's evenings, suggesting, directing, if not participating in, work and play, ever ready, when the spirits flag or the zest is gone, to propose a change. I know what all this involves, — a little mother-love and a little mother-wit, that's all. It does not require large wisdom, much learning, or the many appliances money can buy or ingenuity contrive. I say, there are no hap-

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pier families than those which have none of these. Ask your own hearts: — away back in those simple homes of childhood, in those bright and happy winter evenings, starting so vividly and so constantly up before your vision, had you these? Not one. By that evening fire a handful of corn kept you busy and merry till the bedtime came. You pushed the buttons or bits of leather to and fro upon the old backgammon board, or from corner to corner chased each other; or you sat with slate and pencil drawing most impossible horses and houses and men, — such as the clever artist of the "House that Jack built" must have brought freshly to the mind of many a man and woman of mid-life, — a dear reminiscence of boyhood's genius, for which I thank him. And then the book was not secretly, greedily read in a corner, enjoyed alone as now, but was sacredly kept till the evening, that all might hear it; and father read, and mother knitted, and children listened; and then they talked about it in the day, interchanging childish thought and parent wisdom, making the book a living, real, and profitable influence, a friend as well as an employment. All these things are cheap, and possible still, and all that the variety of our not more wise refinement may have introduced has not increased one whit the material of true happiness. The narrowest home of poverty has at its command, if but the heart will

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see and seize it, every means essential to the best and happiest use of evening.

I grant that it will require thought and time, and some perplexity and failure; and what one thing in life that we do does not involve these? And if you are willing, for the sake of some lesser success, to subject yourselves to these, if you contrive and toil and persevere for other things, why shall you complain, or halt, or refuse here? Your homes and your hearts will receive the exceeding great reward of your endeavor. Finding their pleasure and their joy and their profit in their homes, your children will be saved from depraved tastes and guilty pleasures; and when they come to leave you, the new home will not find them restless and craving for the higher flavoring of other scenes and pleasures. Of the many things warring against the home, open and disguised, nothing wars more successfully than the little pains taken by parents to make the evenings pleasant and profitable to the children.

But how are we to accomplish this? What are the means possible in every household?

Do we not mistake in not having some instruction at home, aside and separate from that of school, less formal, more genial, — the sort of education for which the home is preëminently qualified, — the drawing out of the child the impressions and opinions received

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at school, which, as left by school, have always more or less that is crude about them? Do we not divorce the home and the school, when the home should in some direct way be made to bear upon the school, broadening and deepening that which it marks out? You expect impossibilities of your teachers and your children if you look for a thorough furnishing without your help. How much good it would do, how much pleasant occupation it would afford, how much valuable information would you receive, from ferreting out together with your children the hints or facts brought home from school, and with how much more zeal would they take hold of studies which they saw interested their homes! Collateral information, always valuable, oftentimes is of more importance than that which is direct. Nor is this less possible where the parents have had no early advantage. How many through interest in their children's studies, studying with or taught by them, have been enabled to supply the early deficiency, and through loving interest in their offspring, though late in life, have acquired, not knowledge merely, but a love for knowing! They are very few who, if they have the will, cannot find the way to a mutual intellectual benefit in the evening hours of the home.

The evening may still further be used for moral instruction, — not the dull, prosy, set inculcation of

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morals, but that incidental teaching for which every home furnishes sufficient material and opportunity. The fireside morality of which the more advanced so frequently speak, which they allude to as the influence of home, was of this nature, — the chance culling from every fact and incident, and the apt impressing at the moment of the best lesson that the moment taught, — a thing done oftentimes in utter unconsciousness by the parent, the inevitable welling over of a spirit that was full of the purpose of blessing and sanctifying home. At home, I remember that this was constantly going on, and the little chance — let me rather say *providential* — seeds which fell at the evening fireside were the seeds full of the life that ripens for the harvest. I have no sense of the " too much " there, but of a constant, yet largely unconscious, evening influence, — influence of silence sometimes, eloquent and effective as that of lip. It gave our home its grace and joy, and made its power.

I now come to touch the home in one of its most difficult relations. Next to religion I know no one subject more important, more easily to be mistaken in, more conscientiously to be decided upon, more resolutely to be met, more judiciously to be carried out, than the subject of the evening amusements of the home. It is a subject I cannot here go so thoroughly into as I should like, and I know very well that what

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I may say will shock the prejudices or the principles of some, while I shall fail of the sympathy of others, and perhaps peril my reputation with many. But I have something to say under this head which is not the birth of the moment, and may, therefore, perhaps be worthy a hearing.

The care of the parent should be not only not to repel, but to win. Without abating one whit of its authority, home should be a place every way genial to the growing spirits in it. Its orderings should change and keep pace with the development of the natures it enfolds. In the home, and from earliest existence, you detect the spirit of play. In the frolic laugh of the baby, in the merry and perpetual gambol of the child, in the restless noise of the boy, and the matronly propensity of the girl, you see how early and how large a part in every life is the element of play. In the earlier years the parent has little to do but to control it, to keep the rollicking exuberance within due limit.

But as the years roll, and the child grows, there comes the necessity, not merely for controlling, but directing. And here I think the first grave task of parentage begins. As home inevitably ceases to be the only law, and each young person becomes more and more law unto himself, some judgment and some tact will be requisite that this critical period be passed

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through without alienating the child. Some homes, disregarding a law that speaks as plainly in our natures as the law that was spoken from the mountain, shut off the still jubilant spirit from enjoyment which one portion of his being craves, as much and as rightly as another portion craves bread. Home, which was once play, is now restraint, and the boy or girl is assured of heinous wickedness lurking under pleasures in which he longs to participate as others do, in whom, for the life of him, he can detect nothing of the embryonic demon. Some homes make no effort, or but feebly set themselves against the torrent of young will that sets itself against every remonstrance. They offer no counteracting home inducements, and tamely yield to the pressure they should control, and you find the home deserted for a round of senseless outside frivolities, interrupted now and then by some sharp, sudden pulling up, as an awakened sense of parental responsibility for the moment demands. What real good that does, you may see by dropping in some time where pouting daughters and irritated sons tell of some coveted indulgence forbidden by parental freak. In other homes you find the parent spurring the child by precept and example, feeding its growing love for dress, for pleasure, for excitement, converting life into mere enjoyment, wasting the present, and insuring a future of utter

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uselessness. As I judge, neither of these should be the pattern for our homes.

If history, observation, experience, — yes, and Revelation even, — combine to tell us any thing, it is that the young, at least, require amusement. No less does prudence teach us that those amusements should be mainly in the presence, always under the control, of the home.

What shall the amusements of the home be?

Where there is the ability and the taste, I regard music — as combining in happiest proportions instruction and pleasure — as standing at the head of the home evening enjoyments. What a never-failing resource have those homes which God has blessed with this gift! How many pleasant family circles gather nightly about the piano, how many a home is vocal with the voice of song or psalm! In other days, in how many village homes the father's viol led the domestic harmony, and sons with clarinet or flute or manly voice, and daughters sweetly and clearly filling in the intervals of sound, made a joyful noise! There was then no piano, to the homes of this generation the great, the universal boon and comforter. One pauses and blesses it, as he hears it through the open farm house window, or detects its sweetness stealing out amid the jargons of the city, — an angel's benison upon a wilderness of discord, soothing the weary

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brain, lifting the troubled spirit, pouring fresh strength into the tired body, waking to worship, lulling to rest. Touched by the hand we love, a mother, sister, wife, — say, is it not a ministrant of love to child, to man, — a household deity, — now meeting our moods, answering to our needs, sinking to depths we cannot fathom, rising to heights we may not reach, leading, guiding, great and grand and good, — and now stooping to our lower wants, the very frolic of our souls reverberating from its keys? The home that has a piano, — what capacity for evening pleasure and profit has it! Alas that so many wives and mothers should speak of their ability to play as a mere accomplishment of the past, and that children should grow up looking on the piano as a thing unwisely kept for company and show!

So is it with drawing, an art which lies, like music, within the reach of most, and, since our common schools have begun to teach the rudiments, an accomplishment possible to all. I have known whole families, evening after evening, absorbed in truest delight, now roaring with laughter at the grotesque, now pleased and surprised at the ingenious or the exact, now admiring a landscape, now criticizing an animal, and again convulsed at a caricature. Many a home evening has been, and may be, profitably spent in

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acquiring and practising a skill which may always be made available.

Then there come evening games, and their name is legion. They are both quiet and noisy, and one marvels at the ingenuity displayed in their multitude and variety, and still the wonder grows as each new home circle reveals some play you never heard of, and each new year pours before you its bewildering flood of games. Certainly in these days there is no lack of such amusement, — only I think the great abundance makes the young more exacting and less satisfied than once.

Checkers, backgammon, and chess come among the recognized, familiar, and harmless amusements of the home evening. And why not cards? I do not believe these last deserve their bad preëminence. I know the mischief they have done, but then the others are not immaculate; and I would ask what there is about a game of cards, in itself and intrinsically, worse than about a game of chess? There is a deal of difference between the use of any thing and its abuse, and I am apt to think the *mere use* of very few things in any way harmful. The minister who sits for long evenings over his chess, and returns to it again and again, is just as far from a proper use of chess as the man who spends night after night at his cards is from a proper use of them. Gambling I do not allude to,

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because gambling does not obtain in our homes, — or if it should in any, I have only to say that gambling is the perversion of the legitimate use of cards, just as the making of ardent spirit from the sugar-cane or corn or rye is a perversion of their legitimate use. You do not curse or refuse the one because of its abuse; why should you the other? I know what cards have done, what they are doing; but the sin is with the man, not with the card. Gambling is the accidental form the evil within him takes. Destroy the cards, and that evil will break out in some other thing. It is too late to attempt to put down by the force of prejudice or religion a thing which is an established fact among us, a thing which owes very much of its fascination and its influence to its being prohibited in, exiled from, the home. Everywhere our young people meet it. If it is forbidden, they regretfully refuse to join, or they disobey, — and either is bad for them. What is better with this and some other things — which we may wish were out of the world, but will not go for our wishing — is to own up to our children that the thing in itself is not bad; show them — yes, *teach them* — the difference between use and abuse. Establish the limit. I do not say they will not cross it, but I do say they are in much less danger of crossing it. I am wont to think that my experience, from a very large and varied

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acquaintance with boys at different boarding-school and young men in college, is not wholly worthless, and the result of observation and experience with me is, that the danger in the great majority of cases is to those who have only been taught in their homes that cards are the invention of the Devil. Of the homes I can recall in which the young were permitted this amusement, I cannot recall one that has been shaded by the momentary suspicion that any member of it was making an improper use of his knowledge; — and I am willing to say, though I know what I risk in saying it, that, acting as I conceived to be for the best, I have allowed my own boys the unrestricted use of cards. At first, every leisure moment was given to them; but the surfeit came, and the cards lie unused. There is no more danger. The spell that is broken once is broken forever. That was the way in which I was treated about the theatre; in that way it was that the first fascination of it received early and forever its death. The truth is, our children have got to fight their own way through the world. It is little we can do for them; but one of the "little things," as it seems to me, is to teach them the difference between use and abuse. Honestly I believe that our homes may derive sincere and proper pleasure from a moderate participation in games of mingled chance and skill, and we may send our sons and daughters

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with less fear out into the world, than if all participating had been forbidden and all indulgence considered vile.

As mingling pleasure and a healthful exercise, I mention dancing as an evening amusement of the home. I do not simply mean that it should be confined to the members of home, because there are few homes where there are enough to make this possible; but my meaning is, that it should be rather the informal thing in our homes, than the costly and foolish thing it is made elsewhere. It is the adjuncts of dancing, rather than the dancing itself, which seem to me objectionable. What could be more wise in a parent, what could give more genuine pleasure, than to invite in a few of the young friends of the household for a couple of hours of rational dancing, without expense, without dress, without any thing to eat? I marvel that parents who say a good deal about the style of parties to which their children go, who seem to be alive to the very objectionable things connected with public and private assemblies, do not take the initiative in some movement of this sort. Far better than fretting at your children for doing as others do, or running a useless tilt against the fashion of the day, is it to fling open the doors of your house, and take in under the protection of the safeguards of home those whom you are voluntarily exposing to hazards

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of health and character. It will be some trouble, it is true; but what right have you to weigh that against the good of your children? The expense, the late eating, the late hours, the absurdities of dress, the dangerous excitement of polka and waltz, the envy which always comes of elaborate displays, the hard feelings, the waste of days before and after, which are the really objectionable things, may in this way be obviated. The improprieties which creep in in a crowd, or where there is no home restraint, would thus be impossible. There could be nothing but what the parent would sanction, or might easily check.

I know this will not suit young people altogether. The glare, the glitter, the excitement — things they have not yet analyzed, things just varnishing over real and mighty dangers — are the attractive things, and they consider simple dancing a very tame affair. But I am speaking of things I know something about. Mine is neither the prejudiced ground of a recluse, nor the partial ground of a bigot. I have had a large experience in these things. I know the world from mingling in it, and I know where the danger lies. If fathers and mothers knew what they were about, if they would use a discretion which should least desert them here, they would provide at home for their sons and daughters that pleasure which is pure and true, and free from every meretricious alloy.

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And why not have in your homes reading-clubs, sewing-circles, the acting of charades, and private theatricals? Why not settle it with yourselves at once that the young people will and must have amusements, and take it upon yourselves to furnish in proper proportion and variety such as are not objectionable? The whole thing lies in your own hands. You deny these at *your* peril. What you do not grant, in some way they will get. You throw them on the world at *their* peril. What do you know of what goes on, or what undesirable acquaintanceship may be formed, at a public hall? Take amusements into your houses, be one with your children in them, and if they are not satisfied it will prove to you that you have not made the change any too soon. Quiet home amusements will lead to proper social ones, and will form a taste averse to those which are improper.

A single word more. I am convinced that we do not make enough of the child-relish for listening to conversation. If a neighbor or friend comes in, we are apt to think the child must go out. And yet a wide-awake child will sit all the evening, drinking in at eye and ear the intelligent talk of the elders. Not merely is it a wise and gentle mental stimulus, not merely may it instruct, or introduce to new knowledge, or provoke inquiry, but it draws out the heart toward the elder, establishes a much-needed, much-

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overlooked sympathy. The child looks out beyond its own thought and life, feels itself admitted into the high places of other men's experience, comes to have a personal interest, property, in its father's or its mother's friend. Ah! how many in this world there are, the echo of whose voices, once familiar about the home-hearth, friends of the dear ones gone, linger still, twined inseparably with old home memories! Let the children stay and hear the talk, and do you talk wisely for their profit and blessing!

There was in the days of my boyhood *a book* called "Evenings at Home;" and there was in the days of my boyhood *a thing* called "Evenings at Home." I miss them both now; and society, which thinks it has grown so wise, has lost two things which did much toward making the men and women of to-day. Too much the old spend the evening from home, in stores, in clubs, in secret societies, in concerts, and in theatres and balls. Too many things have been devised away from home, which draw the men away, and make them associate exclusively with themselves. Our young people follow where the elders lead. I may be unfortunate, but it is very rarely that I find a young man at home with the family in my evening calls. With both sexes there is a restless craving for outside amusement, as if the evening were for nothing else. I have desired simply to hint at that wealth of

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occupation, improvement, happiness, which there is in our own homes, which it lies with parents to evoke and recommend, neglecting which they have recklessly thrown their children into contact with evils against which they are neither forewarned or forearmed. God placed the inexperienced soul within a home, that about its inexperience a father's and a mother's love might throw their protection. For watch and ward were they set over it. And God made the day for labor, and the night for rest; but where these joined — when the one was ended ere the other begun — His dear love interposed a precious neutral season, and sanctified it to the hallowing associations and influences of home. Let us feel God's command upon us in this precious season; let us neglect neither its responsibility nor its privilege. Let us trim anew the flame of the evening lamp, let us draw in closer circle round the evening table, and let the joy of our present and the blessing of our future come from the holy and happy EVENINGS AT HOME!

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VI.

THE SUNDAY AT HOME.

THERE IS not a gift of God to man which has been so universally misunderstood and abused as the gift of the Sabbath day, — misunderstood and abused quite as much by the religious as by the irreligious. Handed from generation to generation, — always found in our homes and accepted there, — we have grown up thinking that woe remained for those who should depart by one jot or one tittle from the accustomed method of keeping it. The sanction of years has had with us the weight of authority, and wherever the New-Englander has gone, has gone with him, as a peculiar institution, the New England Sunday. I would not speak lightly of a day about which clusters so much that is sacred. I would not deny influences of good that have gone out from it. Stern, harsh, repulsive, exacting, we owe to it much of that which distinguishes New England character, and wins for it confidence and respect. I honor the day. I believe in its capacity for good. I respect the memory

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of those grim old men who fashioned and transmitted it to us, while I long to see a more thoroughly Christian spirit pervading it. Ours has been too long rather the Jew's Sabbath than the Christian's Sunday. I would still wish to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy; but it should be with the holiness of the spirit of the religion of Jesus, not with that of the letter of Moses.

Nothing can be clearer than the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath. The Saviour more than once showed that its ceremonies and forms, and its idea of rest, had no place under his religion. He said that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Man was not to conform to it, but it was to conform to man, changing its methods and modes as the changing circumstances of man required. He was not to be the slave, but the lord of the Sabbath. It may have all been very well that the Jew should keep the day as he did. It was, perhaps, the best way for him. It may be that the Puritan kept it in the best way for himself and his age; but that Puritan strictness and narrowness are desirable, or can be efficacious, in our day, were it not for the power of education and prejudice, no one would allow, and the persistent attempts to force an observance upon a generation every way unlike those going before, is producing pernicious and lasting, if not fatal, results. Many, both of the older

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and younger, are repelled from the day, or observe it only in form, to whom it would be holiest and welcomest if it came in the broad and liberal spirit of the Gospel; while others, frowned upon by those who take to themselves the exclusive spirit of sanctity, are using it to truest advantage. Another generation will not pass without a radical change in the keeping of holy time. There are signs which make that sure. How shall I best spend the Sunday is the anxious question of many, and the patent answer less and less suffices. Not the indifferent and the scoffer, but the man of serious faith and devout life, begins to doubt of so much church-going, of such exclusive religious and public use of the day. I am free to confess that I believe the Sunday will only be safely and sacredly used when it shall be made to minister to a man's domestic and social needs quite as much as his religious.

One of the gravest objections to the popular method of keeping Sunday — I mean the popular religious method — is that it leaves nothing to the home, or, more truly, requires nothing of the home. Before the domestic duties of the day have fairly subsided, the bell proclaims that the hour of morning service has come. An early dinner hardly gives time for a prompt appearance at the Sunday school, and the close of the afternoon service finds old and young

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pretty thoroughly weary, and longing for some little relaxing. If now the Sunday-school lesson for the next Sunday is to be learned, and after tea the evening meeting of some sort attended, where is the room for the home? And what has the home to do with and what does the home for hundreds and thousands of families in our land, with whom God's blessed day of peace and joy and rest is a series of public exhortations, to the excitements or instructions of which the whole Sunday duty is narrowed? We have no warrant for such a state of things in revelation or reason or common sense; and yet thousands of reasonable and common-sense people "drag this dead weight of the Sunday" with them through life, supposing that so they do God service. Do we not do a better service when we keep a proper equilibrium among our duties and employments, — when we let the overgrowth of no one overshadow or destroy any other? If the Sabbath was made for man, it was made for man in the home, just as surely as for man in the church, and he who, through devotedness to his church, leaves the home to itself, does not remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

The Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset. The Jewish Sabbath, consequently, began with the setting sun of the day previous, — if such an expression be allowable. The Puritans, who were

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rather Jewish than Christian in their faith and their forms, imitated this custom, and, as it was called, "kept" Saturday night as a sort of preparation. There was an element of truth and value in that, though carried by them to an extreme. It chanced that a part of my boyhood was passed upon the Connecticut River, where then lingered, in all its force, the old Puritan rigor of faith and conduct and form. The sinking of the Saturday's sun was a thing of dread to us children, for it ushered in the long, weary, monotonous Sabbath, born, as we thought, out of due time. In the short winter days, how soon that setting came, and then woe to that luckless youngster whom the desire for one coast more, or one more skate over the pond, prevented from reaching home before the stars came out. My own was a harder case than most, — for those under whose charge I was had brought with them from their homes the habit of observing the Sunday evening, while the community in which they resided demanded as scrupulous observance of Saturday evening; so that I, instead of escaping both, as I ought, was compelled to keep both. I can see now those Sunday suns sinking in the west. Anxious eyes, through the village and at the farmhouse windows, wait for the last ray, and then, as the cautious father decides that Sunday is really past, the doors fly open, boys and girls rush out to play, and

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upon the still evening air resound the blows of the farmer's axe as he prepares the wood for the Monday washing. All of this I saw, — I, too, longed to be free, — but alas! the inexorable Sabbath held me till the morrow.

This was the extreme, and it is thus that in the end all extremes caricature the truth. The idea of preparing for Sunday was a good one, but the loosening of all restraint upon the Sunday evening — a virtual compensation for the thrall of the evening previous — was an inconsistency unworthy of the day, ludicrous in many respects at the time, and injurious in its influence. At school, in other places, I encountered, in a mitigated form, the use of the Saturday evening as a preparation for the ensuing day, and I have seen something of it in homes, and I pronounce it good. Many a little household duty may just as well be attended to on Saturday evening as left to worry and harass a morning, the most pressed and anxious of all the week — if the truth were told — in many a home. It would be a great wisdom in the head of the home to insist that a certain class of Sunday necessities should be attended to on Saturday, and a greater wisdom still if a later portion of the evening should be used for such reading and thought as will gradually bring the mind away from its world-life, and prepare it to enter upon the higher duties and privileges of the

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morrow. Largely the Sunday fails of accomplishing what it should, because it finds us unprepared. We break sharply and reluctantly and but half away from the routine of ordinary life, rather at the compulsions of a regular hour than from the impellings of the heart. We need a gradual *toning down* of thought and life. We cannot really enjoy and improve Sunday without it. The great gulf we fix between our week-days and our Sundays, between our world-life and our soul-life, we cannot jump or bridge, but must pass quietly and deliberately over. Saturday evening should be for the subsiding of the things of the world, that the dawn of the morrow may be the right dawning for the first day of the week. It should be as the porch to the temple of the Sabbath.

I have brought with me from childhood a reminiscence of Saturday afternoons, which I enjoy vastly as a reminiscence, but in vain strive to produce again as a fact. I cannot make Saturday afternoon seem as Saturday afternoon used to. All things about them wore a peculiar aspect. All sounds and silence even were unlike what they were at other times. It was as if all Nature were preparing for the Sabbath, — as if her unpolluted ear caught from far the first signal of the approaching of one of the days of the Son of man, and reverently prepared to meet it. Other nights shut down around us as calm and still, — just

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as sweet and cheerful were the evening songs of the birds, just as content the loitering cows coming from the pasture, just as long and silent the shadows upon the fields and away off upon the hills, each night as then; but there was a something ineffable of peace, content, rest, that no other evening had, — a foreshadowing of the Sabbath, — which must have been caught unconsciously from those preparatory duties always associated with the last evening of the week. It was a feeling of childhood, perhaps, and like childhood has passed away forever; but as David longed for the water of the well by the gate of Bethlehem, so have I longed to feel as I once did on the evening of the day preceding the Sabbath.

The Sabbath comes. How perfect and how grateful is its silence! Dumb is labor and hushed all tumult and care. Even the great marts of trade are deserted, and cities rest. The very birds sing a new song, and a certain delicious soothing greets you at your waking, and murmurs to you gratefully: "This is the day the Lord has made." Dull and dead must he be beyond the dulness and deadness of the mere sluggard, who does not feel some awakening of the better man within him at the hallowed advent of the Sabbath morning.

At the very threshold of the day, we meet with that which has much to do with the character of our home

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Sundays. I mean that general habit of self-indulgence which permits two or three extra hours of sleep on Sunday. I do not believe there is any one thing introduces so much trouble and vexation into the home, tends to so much Sabbath-breaking, and gives rise to more and more various disturbance, than this habit, which ought to be honored only in the breach. What a record would the Sunday mornings at home of a village or city be, and what varied unhappiness should we find beginning there and dragging its troubled trail through the livelong day, "from morn till dewy eve." The day has not started right, and it cannot go on right. Something is lost that cannot be found; something escaped that cannot be recaptured. Squandered at the drowsy importunacy of the body is time that was not yours to squander. Your home had a claim upon it,— made a direct demand of it. Your selfishness clogged or stopped the domestic wheels. The day long it suffers because of you. Something is omitted, or is imperfect, or postponed. I grant that there are sometimes those upon whom labor lays so heavy a hand that the Sunday demands some longer indulgence in sleep; but in the vast majority of cases the plea for the necessity is simply the plea of our indolence. It is the sluggard's plea. You do not take special interest in Sunday. You have got nothing to do. Sunday is a day of rest, and

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so you turn again to slumber. Is there not something of self-reproach when at last you fairly rouse yourself, and feel that it is late, — when you hurry yourself and hurry others and are hurried by them, and when all your hurrying will not bring things as they ought to be? Your domestics have taken their cue from you, and they are late. Your breakfast is late. Things that ought to have been done yesterday, — shoes that ought to have been blacked, hats and gloves that ought to have been found, buttons that ought to have been sewed on, all come at the last impossible moment to be done, — all importunate, — making of the Sunday morning at home clatter and confusion and worry, — destroying its peace, unsettling the mind, unstringing the nerves, and the second bell calls perturbed and every way illy prepared spirits to the sacred solemnities of worship, hurries you late into church, or keeps you in vexation at home. Ah! the wretchedness every week entailed upon homes, every week repeated, because of the needless extra sleep of the Sunday morning!

It is a wretched mistake men make when they take it for granted that the prime purpose of the Sabbath is physical rest, and that so they have the right to use its hours in a dull animal torpor. Inordinate lying in bed is not the sort of rest that even the animal economy demands. Idleness does not rest the mind, lazi-

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ness cannot rest the body. No good comes of it. The truest rest is that which comes, not of lethargy, but of simple change of work ; and the father, mother, son, daughter, who will rise as early on Sunday as on any other day, and set about the Sunday's duties, will find themselves as truly refreshed when Monday comes as those who loitered long in bed, while they will have gained a day in which every thing had its proper place and time. It is a grave mistake of the home to allow the earlier hours of its Sundays to be spent in sleep.

To consecrate and complete the home, there must be religion in it ; and, as the world and life are, Sunday must be looked to mainly for the giving that consecration and completeness. In itself the home is a sacred place. Its founder is God. Its gifts, its possibilities are his. The things sacred to the soul and life are of it. It is the place of birth, of growth, of death, — and these three great mysteries, these processes in our being, sanctify it unto us. Distinctively religious then should the home be made by us, and every father and mother be known as the priest and priestess of the domestic altar. The old Levitical law should be revived among us, and every man "sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord."

But here we are in the midst of difficulties various and great, — which many seem to think they escape by avoiding altogether, — which are only to be escaped

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by being met. What is to be the religion of home, and by what means is it to be established?

The religion of home should be broad and genial as religion in itself is, not confined to seasons and to tasks, not to catechisms and articles of faith, not to set acts and forms, not to the Bible and devotion, but liberal and complete, enfolding and touching every thing, everybody, every position, relation, act, — joys as well as sorrows, — the least, the common, as well as the greatest and the exceptional. It should have all the reverence of the first commandment, and all the scope of the second, — and this secured by word and work, by precept, by influence direct and indirect, — not by causing to know and do, but by leading the way in knowing and doing. The thing most to be apprehended, most to guard against, is disgusting the members of the home with the subject of religion, — a thing many well-meaning homes have done.

I presume that nearly every child in what would commonly be called a Christian home has been taught to pray. That is, in its early childhood it was taught the Lord's Prayer, or some simple petition which it nightly repeated to its mother. But this habit would seem to be put away with other childish things, and the parent really knows nothing about the devotional habits of the growing boys and girls, who probably have long ago discontinued a practice whose spiritual

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meaning and importance they never knew any thing about. Of the religious habits of their parents children are left very much in the dark, save as a suspicion may grow in their minds that they talk of, and perhaps demand of them, that of which in themselves they give no evidence. A child will sometimes be so simple as to turn upon a parent and ask him if he prays, or believes, or does this or that, to the parental confusion, perhaps, though scarcely to his reformation. This is wrong. No child should ever be left to doubt or suspect a parent's faith. There should be a free and true communion on this first and greatest of subjects, — an interchange of thought and feeling, purpose and hope. Home was made for the soul, and the parent is parent of it as well as of the body, — and he has but skimmed the surface of his duty who has fed and fashioned the body, stored and disciplined the mind, but done nothing for the soul. I do not believe in talk about one's inner life for talk's sake, but how it would hallow the relation of parent and child, help them both, if the interior of each heart were laid bare, as it many times may be in the confidential intercourse of home, — and how it would speed a child onward in its work could it but know that through just these experiences and struggles father and mother have passed before.

I do not believe much in children's going to church.

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I do not understand upon what grounds any one can reasonably expect a child, the very incarnation of unrest, to sit all dressed and prim, with his feet dangling in the air, for a mortal hour or more, when he cannot be kept still five minutes at home. It is an idea that had better be exploded, that there is any good to come from such a martyrdom. Between the sufferings of the child, the anxiety of the mother, and the general disturbance in the neighborhood if any thing goes wrong, an amount of wretchedness results from the experiment not to be compensated by any advantage supposed to be derived from the early formation of a habit. The child can get no instruction from the church services, — the subjects treated and the mode of treatment are alike beyond his grasp. You do not take him to Lyceum lectures, you do not read to him dry essays of morality, or expect him to comprehend or delight in many of the topics of your own discourse; and how can you expect that the constrained attitude and enforced decorum of the pew should be any thing short of a penance, endangering rather than securing an after habit or after love of attendance. I do not believe the church is any place for children under ten years of age, unless they go willingly, and require no oversight. There is an amount of misery growing out of this custom that would amaze us if we could become cognizant of it. The place for

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the child on the Sunday is at home, and his earlier religious culture should be exclusively of it.

I say this not forgetting that there is such an institution as the Sunday school. Much as I think it capable of accomplishing, there grows in me the conviction that it has had a direct and largely injurious effect upon religious training in our homes, and, from being a supplement, has ended in supplanting the teaching of home. The home should be the Sunday school of the child. It used to be so; but no one can doubt that, since the prevalence of this institution, there has been a marked decay in the religious instruction of home, — even very conscientious and careful parents delegating this delicate task. I think it a pity that the Sunday school ever departed from its original mission to the poor, the ignorant, and degraded. It has a work and a place among them; it supplies what they could not otherwise obtain. It is not so with us. We are capable of teaching our children, — any one of us. That is one of the things we ought not to allow any other to do for us; that is one of the things for which Sunday was given to the home; virtually, that is one of the things we engaged to do when God intrusted to our keeping the immortal spirits of our children; and through all discouragement, defeat, and failure, we are to toil at it, till, by experiment and the blessing of God, we have arrived

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at the ability to meet and discharge our obligation. Above and before all others ought the parent to be the religious teacher of the child. In the days before the Sunday school it was so. There was a general catechizing now and then by the minister, but the work was done in the home, and any one who knows any thing about it knows that we of the present generation are much better versed in Scripture, in doctrine and duty, than are they of the rising generation. And yet we had no advantage of Sunday schools, — no teachers, no libraries, no general lessons, — but only the humble efforts, often of humble parents, teaching from the one book, and enforcing by example what they taught. The best, the truest, the deepest lessons we have learned have been from the simple, but earnest teachings of our homes. The fault of to-day's degeneracy lies with *our* homes; — not that they have deliberately and of set purpose given up their duty; but, finding the Sunday school recognized, and the custom of sending children established, unconsciously they have surrendered a duty they ought sacredly to have kept. Go through the Sunday schools and question the classes, and you will be amazed at the universal ignorance of things which ought to have been taught by mothers in the nursery. Go into homes, and you will find parents satisfied with seeing that the lessons are got, — not all doing

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even that, — while about the lesson or about any serious topic there is no conversation and no interest. The Bible is a sealed book in our homes, — a *show* book merely, sometimes, — and all the religious knowledge the child receives comes from the Sunday chool, from a teacher oftentimes wholly inadequate to the task, — or, however adequate to the mere work of instruction, never able to take the place or discharge the duties of a parent. I know there is a semblance of treason in this; but while I own all the Sunday school has done, and see more that it may do, I believe it has, unwittingly, inflicted an injury upon our homes, nor do I see any good reason for supposing they will return to their duty so long as the Sunday school shall occupy the position and offer to do the work that it does. If I could carry out my idea, instead of the Sunday school as it is, I would have a children's service, and leave the direct teaching of the day to the homes. Perhaps this will be, when homes are what they should be.

I say that every parent is solemnly bound to give his children religious instruction, and to secure to himself for it a portion of the Sunday. Many men say to me, as an excuse for attending church but a half of the day, "I want a part of the day with my children," — and I feel that that is all very well, and I sympathize with it, provided it be not a mere get-off,

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or if they do something more than merely amuse themselves with them. I say that is just what every man does want, — a part of the Sunday with his children, in which he shall be, not their playmate, not their companion, but their religious teacher; and you may depend upon it we are neglecting one of our first duties when we neglect to secure and to use a part of Sunday for just that thing. And the man who goes to church all day and in the evening, and sends his children to the Sunday school, cannot very well do it if he want to. First of all, we need some abridgment of this much church-going. It is little better than a profanation of a day which God intended should be consecrated to the best good of the whole man, not to the cramming of one part and the starving of the rest.

The instruction of the home should not be merely formal, from the book, nor of the character of a school task, but every way genial. There is no fear that in making the subject interesting you shall destroy its vitality, as some seem to think, while "you do a very dangerous thing when you make that wearisome which you wish to be most loved." I can recall the days when I had no home, — when the Sabbath was long, monotonous, wearisome, and I used to be shut up by myself through the long summer morning, with Watts's hymns in my hand, and the craving for out

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doors in my heart. I can hear now the very buzzing of the flies in that my Sunday prison. I am afraid I profited poorly by those weekly incarcerations, for I never could master Watts's hymns. When I went home, it was early summer, and my father's house was just beneath the old Christ Church, in Boston, and our Sunday lessons were with our mother, on the grass plot in the yard, — less a lesson of books than of talk, — while old Christ Church bells poured all their sweetness out upon the gathering stillness of the Sabbath evening. "Those evening bells!" They are a part of many fragrant memories and blessed influences! That is the way home should teach, — so as to leave a joy behind, — not so much by the book as from what the book has already taught the parent heart, — not from the Bible merely, but from the page of that other revelation nature makes, — not from these only, but from history, from your and your children's experience, from all the myriad suggestions that come from time to time, and that flow from you in the confidence of Sunday intercourse. This will not be easy. Nothing of real benefit is. No item of parental responsibility is to be met off-hand. This is a thing for thought, for prayer, for preparation, for experiment. Yet it is a thing that every father and every mother can do and ought to do. Deliberately should the Sunday teaching of the children be pre-

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pared for. It should have some plan, and be thoroughly done. How you shall best reach your children patience and time and your parent tact will show. All have not the same gift, but all have some gift. Some will succeed best in one way, some in another. One parent has this gift, and another has that; one child has this want, and the other that. Never weary with the sameness of your teaching, or the length of your exercise, but consult the limits and the laws of the child-nature in all things.

Do you say that this is demanding too much, — that which is possible only to the few of leisure, of ability, or of wealth? I reply, that the facts, as they may be gathered from many a New England home, are against you. I ask only what every parent may do, — has the time and means, and ought to have the ability and the willingness, to do. If you do not know any thing about religion, and do not care any thing about it, or if you care so little as to be unwilling to make the sacrifice and the exertion necessary, that is one thing; but you never heard of a poor, simple-minded man or woman, whose heart was right, and who followed the simple leadings of nature, who failed to make truth pleasant and palatable and profitable. There is not in all the range of all the libraries such a series of narrative as crowds the pages of the Bible, and narrative is the craving of the youngest

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child, and no narratives so much interest children as those of the Old and New Testament. You may not succeed the first time or the second, nor do you in any thing; but you will soon find that your children come to you, saying, "Tell us something more from the Bible," and you will find that the *telling* is better for them than the *reading*, relieving the narrative of its antiquated forms of speech, and giving a certain air of reality to the circumstances, as well as a feeling of greater liberty to question. This is for the younger a fertile and inexhaustible field, opening up treasures of wisdom and wonder. Advancing years may require other culture; but for that your own advancing experience qualifies. Keeping step with your children's progress, you may always be companion and fellow-pupil at least; indeed, the wisest of us always finds himself these; and so these home talks with the children react upon ourselves, and redound to our own good. There are beside a multitude of topics for the home Sunday. There are matters of outside interest and benevolence; — no dearth at all, but a myriad subjects and a myriad helps starting up always about those in earnest, unknown, unguessed by the indifferent; a Divine hand ever leading the way and pointing to the parent heart the manner of leading the tender spirit on. Never fear but God will show you how, when you earnestly undertake.

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The home Sunday, however, is not to be spent exclusively in religious employments, nor ever to the extent of wearying. It must have relaxing. Why must every toy be put away, every pleasant book be shut, every expression of glee repressed, and the whole child subdued to an uneasy quietude, simply because it is Sunday? Does not God let the birds sing their week-day songs, the waters wear their week-day sparkle, the flowers exhale their week-day perfume, and shall the child be rudely kept from all week-day exuberance, and fretted or crushed into obedience by the perpetual reminder that it is Sunday? What wonder that the Sunday grows to be a thing of horror and of hate? I believe it is well to teach and establish some difference, — that some things should be put aside till Monday, — but I more than pity the unhappy ones tortured into a silence as unnatural as it is absolute. The houses that the week long resound with all the various revelry of childhood, but on Sunday are pervaded as with the hush of death, — in which you long painfully for some outbreak of hearty, honest noise, — are not truly homes, and do not leave on the mind the holiest and happiest impressions of home. How many there are to whom the memory of the home Sunday comes up as the one dark and unpleasant shadow on a fair vision; how many owe to it their aversion to the day, and their

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present neglect of its duties and opportunities; and how many homes are growing up now without wholesome restraint, — the one extreme the inevitable consequence of the other! The Sabbath was made for the child as well as for the man. It must not override the nature of the one or the other. The child is greater than the Sabbath, not to be tyrannized over by it, but to be ministered unto. Its duty is to serve and not to reign; and our duty is that it be taught to serve wisely.

There is one thing which comes under the head of the home Sunday, which requires a moment's thought. I mean Sunday recreation. Many of us probably recollect that all our homes allowed to us was a short walk after sunset, and many of us could probably say that the going down of the Sabbath sun was the most welcome fact of the week. "Of all the painful inflictions of boyhood, I know hardly any worse than that of wading through the slough of Sunday." This was another injustice the ingenuity of our fathers contrived for us. I do not want to see the Sunday made into a holiday. I do not want to see riot and noise taking the place of its proper decorum, but I should like to see that it is considered no violation of the day for a family either to walk or to ride together quietly as i draws toward the evening. "Let it have the duty of our devotion; but when that is satisfied, let it also

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have the gratitude of our gladness." I welcome it as one of the pleasantest harbingers of spring when by my house the family groups come strolling leisurely, enjoying the evening of the day God made, and seeking that refreshing body and spirit need, — to many the only opportunity absorbed life allows for this wholesome recreation. Welcome the baby's wagon, and the children's voices, and the manly stride, and the matronly serenity, and a blessing on each home-group as it passes. The day is the better day for their walk. They have seen God's evening, and God's trees and flowers. Nature has spoken to them, and they will go home happier and sleep more sweetly. For them the flowers blossom, for them the elm-trees bend, for them the evening clouds are painted, for them the stars are lighted, and from all, it may be unconsciously, they and theirs are receiving impressions to hallow and lighten a week of toil. Alas that the street should be the only place for these Sunday walks! Wisely has an English writer said, "An open space near a town is one of Nature's churches, and it is an imperative duty to provide such things." What a blessing is Boston Common, — not an ornament, not the city's lungs, not the place for holidays, not a playground in the week or a promenade for the Sabbath, but one of "Nature's churches;" and if you can see that well-ordered host of families there of a

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Sunday afternoon, while the western clouds, and the green leaves, and the murmuring fountain *preach*, and not feel that there is some better, sanctifying influence from it all, I pity your blindness or your bigotry. God speaks not from pulpits only, or from places of man's consecrating, but he hath put a tongue in every living thing, and a spirit in all nature, to which he gives no Sabbath rest. Not as a sanitary measure should public grounds be opened in every crowded town, but as a great educator of the soul in humanity and virtue, as affording to those of narrow means and narrow homes and over-busy lives a Sunday opportunity of seeing and enjoying with their children the sun and air and works of God.

And what will you prove to me to be the objection to a quiet family drive, where there are the means for driving? That young man who wastes his whole Sabbath, whose soul has starved all day long, whose cigar and dress are his main claims to the name of gentleman, who drives with fury and with yells, half drunk, through your streets, or that other, who, with a more seeming decency, spends the after part of a day he has otherwise wasted or but listlessly observed in a more sober and quiet ride, get no aid and comfort from your example. That is the way the world is ever whipping in those who leave her old ruts. If I go noisy and drunk through the streets, or if I outrage

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a very proper sentiment by starting on my drive while my neighbors are on their way to church, I may be justly said to set an example of just that thing; but no license can cloak itself under my quiet riding with my family when the worship of the day is over. We have been too long cowed by the fear of setting bad examples, — the convenient cry of the timid, the narrow, and the sinful. I set an example only of that which I actually do. He who does something else does not follow my example, but does a separate and a different thing. If my neighbor or I myself drive quietly to Mount Auburn, or elsewhere, on the Sunday, I do not doubt that some will say we must not be surprised if young men urge as a palliation of their day's riot our example. The absurdity of the plea is only not palpable because of the long habit of allowing it.

The crowning of the Sunday at home is the repeating and singing of hymns. One has grave questions and perplexities about what is commonly called domestic worship, and I sincerely sympathize with the man who honestly and frankly says he does not know what to do. Such a service should be less for the adults than the children, and the prayer that shall engage the attention, enlist the sympathy, instruct the heart, and express the wants of childhood, is the rarest of all utterances. Many a man may be able to pray for

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himself and for others who wholly fails in his attempts with children. Candidly I think that many of our domestic services are only a weariness to our households, and leave any but the best impression. But about a hymn, that has become a sort of household word, there is something different. It is a rhymed prayer, and the child loves and comprehends it. It is the thing never forgotten. Years, distance, change, death, do not separate us from it. You may have forgotten every maternal precept, the tones of the voice you first loved, the very features of your mother may have become effaced, but with you still, and fresh as at first, is the hymn she taught or sung to you in the Sunday evening twilight of the dear old home, — a presence and an influence forever. Grateful to me at the close of the Sabbath the chorus of childish voices singing their evening hymn, helped out, it may be, by the fingers of the mother and the voice of the father, that so stirs the memories of that dear old home of mine, broken and gone forever! Never mind the music, the want of harmony and time. It is the child-service, and by and by, when weary years separate him from the time and place, or the dark hour draws near, there will come pleasantly, sadly, blessedly, over life's dreary interval and waste, these "sounds from home," — the evening worship and the closing act of childhood's Sabbath.

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With the home lies the religious shaping of the young soul, and from all the week this day is separate for that special work. A mistaken piety demands a rigid and exclusive observance, impossible, in reality, to most men and to all children; indolent self-indulgence leaves it to run wholly waste. In some homes it is all restraint, in some, all license. What we want is the safe and wise middle ground which shall make it pleasant and profitable, neither a gloom for the heart nor a weariness to the body. Then most truly the Sabbath day shall be kept and holy, when, disregarding the limitations of the past, we seek to make it minister to the largest good of all, mindful of Nature's laws and limits, and not expecting of the young, or striving for in ourselves, that which we shall only possess by outraging Divine decrees. To this end have I written, adopting for myself the sentiment of an English writer of the seventeenth century: "I hate superstition on the one side, and looseness on the other; but I find it hard to offend in too much devotion, easy in profaneness. The whole week is sanctified by this day, and according to my care of this is my blessing on the rest. I commit my desires to the imitation of the weak, my actions to the censures of the wise and holy, my weaknesses to the pardon and redress of my merciful God."

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VII.

THE NEW ENGLAND HOME.

THE CHARACTER of the New-Englander, perhaps more than that of any other man, is the result of his home. It is not national so much as it is domestic. The virtues which make him stand out among men are not the acquirements of schools and colleges, of travel and society, the transmission of caste, the result of institutions, but virtues brought with him in all their power from the home, and set to work upon the world. He is not a conformer to things as he finds them, but sets himself to make them conform to him. Most tenacious is he of his identity, and, while others lose themselves in their surroundings, he is a Yankee to the end. No clime, no polish, no position, takes that out of him. It is told of a dervish, that by certain signs in the sand he not only decided that a camel had passed that way, but that he was lame and blind and had lost a tooth. And so by signs as unmistakable, sometimes as unnoticed by the careless, you may detect the presence, the influence

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of the New-Englander, — though you may not see the man. I remember, some years ago, after passing through the State of Virginia, and becoming familiar with the peculiarities of plantation buildings and plantation life, that when I entered Fairfax County I felt as if I had been suddenly taken back to the quiet farms of my own State. The substantial barns, the well-ordered outbuildings, the familiar implements, the green blinds, and a certain unmistakable air of New England thrift, surprised me, so sudden and so great was the contrast with the exhausted fields, the shabby negro-quarters, the shiftless aspect of all I had lately seen. "This looks like New England!" I exclaimed, and was told that certain Yankee farmers, some years previous, had taken up a tract of exhausted land, and had made it what I saw, — had planted New England there. So it is wherever he goes. The New-Englander is slow to assimilate with other people. He takes his notions, his prejudices, his character, his *home*, with him. In strange cities I have never failed to detect New-Englanders. There is a something about the individual men and women, but there is more about their homes, which you cannot mistake. Cosmopolite as he is, be it under the tropics, by the western sea, or in the eastern clime, under all his outward conformity, you find him still clinging to the habit and the faith of home.

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Whatever of original, peculiar power there may be in the New England character, its availability is owing mainly to the training of home. I am confident that whatever of good in morals, laws, religion, in enterprise, in literature and art, may be justly attributable to New England influence, may be as justly traced to the New England home. It is the home that has made the man. And wherever he is, on the Arctic sea or in the California mine, it is the memory of home that governs him. His Anglo-Saxon blood would have availed him little, but for his Anglo-Saxon home. It is with man as with the horse, the blood is little without the training; and when we feel inclined to brag a little, — a thing New-Englanders have a *little* inclination to, — or when we trace in the history and progress of this young world the influences of New England, let us remember, that but for her simple and humble homes none of these things could be. These have made our people. We and others are apt to attribute a certain indisputable preëminence in our citizens to our common schools; and so far as mental training goes, this is true; but we must not forget that it is the *moral* characteristics of the New-Englander, more than the mental, which have marked him out as separate and peculiar, — these which have exerted so wide an influence at home and abroad, — and these are the products of our homes.

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I shall never forget a remark once made to me by a gentleman of Northern New York. "I take it for granted," said he, "that a New-Yorker is dishonest until I can prove him honest, but that a Massachusetts man is honest until I can prove him dishonest." I should not have liked to make the remark myself, nor should I be willing to subscribe to it in full; but as, coming from one not of New England, it was worthy of remembrance. I believe there is a reputation of this sort abroad, — that in financial, as in other matters, our own name stands in the advance; and again I say that I believe this is mainly because of our homes, — because of what we were taught, and what we saw of stern and sterling integrity in the far-back days of childhood. And if we are to keep that proud place in coming generations, if we are to furnish our sons with that capital, better than gold, which has been the element of success with us, we must come back to a truer love for, and a more watchful care over, home; we must not suffer these more exciting and brilliant outside things to usurp the power and privilege which is of right its alone, but with a something of the old Puritan spirit, if need be, insist upon those virtues, and those restrictions, in which we can now see lie the foundations of character and usefulness. We are letting the world master the home. The sceptre is passing away from the hearth-stone.

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By our altars and our fires we ought to make our stand, and over the ashes of the past contend for the security of the future. With us who are in the dust and heat of the present is the twofold duty of keeping to the standard transmitted us, and transmitting it as we have received it. It is the legacy of our fathers, of which we are the stewards. It is that by which they have won their proud place in history. While crowns have crumbled and nations wasted and great reputations perished, brighter and brighter has grown the halo that encircles the memories of those who planted and gave the distinctive character to the New England home. That is all they had to give, — that is all we have to bequeathe. Stern and bleak are New England hills and New England shores. Contrasted with the fatness of the plantation and the prairie, her soil may seem sterile and her harvests meagre. Granite and ice may be the only raw material we have to offset the more tempting produce of kindlier climes; but — I say it in no boasting mood — I know no spot upon which the sun shines which has such capacity for *raising men.* Here cluster, centre, and combine all that can be asked for the best advantage of the race, — a climate that invigorates the body, a soil that demands and remunerates labor, rivers for our manufactures, the ocean for traffic and for sustenance, laws, churches, colleges, schools, and behind them all,

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greater than all, *homes*. They will not rank outwardly with baronial castles, or ancestral halls, or, it may be, with the courtlier homes of the "Old Dominion." Engraved upon the page of history, the world would pass them by for those of sounding name or mediæval architecture, but under the low roof, within the farmer's kitchen, beneath the drooping elm, have been born and cultured *men*, who, take it for all in all, are the marked men of the past two centuries.

It is the privilege, as well as the duty, of every man to speak well of the country and the place in which he was born, provided he do no injustice to any other. He is traitor to some of the finest and holiest instincts of humanity if he do not. I do not deny to any their distinctive virtues and attainments, but the occasion only demands that I should speak of New England, and point out some peculiarities in her past homes, which cannot be spared from the present, if our future is to exert the influence for good broadly ascribed to our past.

Of these characteristics I shall place first *religion*, because it is essential to the idea of a true New England home, fundamental to a true New England character. It is not a little curious that in all the Colonies there was some distinct, separate religious tendency, if not faith, even in those with whose organization religion had nothing to do. Pennsylvania, Virginia,

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Maryland, Georgia, are largely impregnated with the peculiar religious views of the primitive settlers, and individuals and homes are largely influenced by them. It was not merely that our fathers fled hither for conscience' sake, and made religion as the corner-stone of their new polity, but it was the kind of religion they professed, and the kind of character which grew from it, that have made us the peculiar people that we are. The Puritan faith, grafted on the Anglo-Saxon stock, has resulted in a man unlike any existing type, — a man to be known to the ages as introducing a new moral and intellectual order. Leave out either element, or place them under other circumstances, and the product were quite another thing. There was much that was gloomy and austere, much that was narrow and bigoted, much that was untrue or perverted, in the Puritan faith, but there was also much of what the human spirit always needs most, a downright, indomitable religious trust, a sincere, though sometimes mistaken, service of God, — a service by no means wanting in gratitude, if never breaking into exuberant joy, — a faith to which we do gross injustice when we regard it as only stern and forbidding.

When I see what substantial and enduring good has come to our homes because of the rigor of faith and discipline among our ancestors, I am more and

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more in the value of the fruit, inclined to forget that the tree was not perfect. Here in New England, because of that rigor, has sprung a more liberal element, toning down the sharper and harsher features of old creeds, and breathing a larger spirit into the interpretations of the Divine will, — not driving God out of our homes, but making him a brighter presence in them, — while life, as it rolls on with all its various experience and teachings, modifies, without destroying, those views of duty and of God our earlier days received. The best that is in us we feel has come from the religion of home, the truths it taught, the duties it enforced, the faith it manifested. The Bible may have been too exclusively our Sunday book, the old home prayers may have been tediously long, the home requirements exact, and home privileges few, and home discipline stern; and yet what do we not owe to them just as they were?

Nor can we spare religion, vital, practical, out of the home of the present. If we do, the peculiar glory of the New England home perishes. Its support is gone. If there be no home religion, no controlling, sanctifying influence taking its rise in that, and mighty because of it, — no one steady, holy law, — the New England home has only a name to live, and our posterity must receive from us that which is but the shadow of its former self. You who are neglecting religion

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in your homes, — as too many are, — who allow fashion and vanity and parade and selfishness to reign there, and not God, — reflect that you are so defrauding posterity of that which has made you what you are. It shall go hardly with New England character and New England influence when religious faith shall cease to characterize and control our homes.

Obedient themselves to the commandments of God, it was inevitable that our fathers should in turn exact *obedience* of their children. With all the inflexible strictness of the Decalogue the law of the home was propounded and administered. As they expected God would deal with them, so they dealt with theirs, with less of mercy than of justice. It was one great point with them — to use our common word — that children should "*mind.*" Unhesitating, unquestioning obedience was the law. No abating, no parleying, no giving reasons, no hearing excuses, no suspense of opinion, no revocation of command, no confession of mistake, but the word once uttered, the will once expressed, that was to be obeyed though the heavens should fall. The autocracy of a father's will, against which the mother set herself, and children plead and wept in vain, was a part of the religious faith of the time. Beneath the stern exterior, there might be a yearning or a breaking heart; but was he not standing in a God-appointed trust? was he not to be held

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to strict account should he not do his duty? And so the more they wept and plead, the more his own heart yearned, the more resolvedly he set himself to carry out the thing he had decreed. We can most of us look back to modes of home government and forms of home discipline now almost obsolete. They seem almost savage to us now; and then they seemed pitiless, — less the decisions of affection than the decrees of will. But from the stand-point of the day this was undoubtedly best. They secured obedience. There were nowhere such well-ordered households as in New England. Fewer sons became prodigal, fewer daughters tasted of shame. The riots and revels of the rich and gay were to them unknown; but they grew up to fear God, to reverence virtue, to respect years and honor experience, — formal and precise, no doubt, and pinched in their views of life and heaven, yet possessed of sterling qualities which stood them well in the world. It has been said that he who would govern must have first learned to obey. And this is true, whether the government be that of self or of many; and thus our fathers, by compelling obedience in their children, enabled them to rule themselves, and fitted them to rule wisely in their homes, and made of us the law-respecting and the law-abiding people that we are.

In the genuine New England home of to-day, still

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that good, old-fashioned thing called *obedience* lingers. In too many homes, judging by what we see and hear, it is deemed intrusive, and turned out. Parents have ceased to command where children have ceased to obey. Aspiring boys and girls put down fathers and mothers, and set aside the will of middle life as old and slow. I have heard boys in short jackets ridicule their mothers, snub their fathers, and behind their backs say every thing of them but what was decent and filial. I have known pert misses, scarcely in their teens, override authority and entreaty, and boast among their associates of the manner in which they had got round their mothers. One may gather from his own observation and experience the most atrocious instances of disrespect and misrule, such as would disgrace an age of barbarism. And unfortunately we have come to consider all this as inevitable, and are lamenting as incurable that which is the work of our own hands. The trouble grows out of the fact that we have not insisted upon obedience. Desirous of avoiding the harshness of our own early experience, we have insensibly run into a more pernicious extreme, relaxing all family discipline, and becoming a mere "mush of concession" — as Emerson says — to our children. If we give a command, they feel pretty sure it will not be insisted on; if we make a threat, they feel confident it will not be executed; if we

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establish a law, in a little while they know we shall grow tired of enforcing it. And so we have virtually put home into the hands of our children, as old Helios put the horses of the sun into the hands of Phaeton, and they seem driving us to much the same disaster. But there are homes where obedience is still believed in and enforced, and they are not the most wretched, but the brightest and the gladdest, the true types of the New England home. Irksome and old-fashioned, stale and unprofitable, as our young people deem obedience, home joy, happiness, growth, all that is peculiar and best about home, are because of it. As in the universe all harmony is because of one controlling will, all order because of consent to law, so, in the home, harmony and order — the topmost graces and virtues — are only through obedience. Were every element and world to have their will and way, and sea and star and fire insist upon their right, something worse than chaos must ensue; and such must be the crash and wreck of home where each rebels against the central authority and law, and makes a law unto itself. In the true home there will be obedience claimed and yielded as a thing of course. So long as a child, whatever his years, shall remain as a member of the home, so long is he under the *law of home.*

I am no advocate of the old rigor of family disci-

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pline. The same end, I believe, may be better secured some other way. Firmness and mildness are not antagonistic qualities. The gentlest beings are most inflexible. The best-regulated household I have known was ruled over by the gentlest spirit, — the firm, sweet mother-love recognized in the daily beauty of child-life. Such spirits win to obedience, and that is ever better than compulsion. A wise man says that "the triumph of domestic rule is for the master's presence not to be felt as a restraint." I should say the same of his will.

Another feature in the New England home is its *thrift*, which many would select as the prominent characteristic of the New England character. I know it has not a very savory name among the more reckless of our own blood and the more haughty inheritors of wealth, as it has no place where labor is despised and toil considered dishonorable. I know that sometimes, under the pressure of opinion, the gibes of society, the demands of fashion, our own repudiate the old home virtue. They do it to their shame. These senseless flings recoil upon those who make them. A proper Yankee thrift is a genuine virtue. Where it degenerates, as it too frequently does, into parsimony and meanness, it becomes every way and utterly despicable. The meanest man on the face of the earth is a mean Yankee. But his meanness is the carica-

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ture, not the consequence, of his thrift. See what that thrift is in those neat homesteads that snuggle away under the trees, among the hills, where the economy that is not mechanical, but moral, rules. The whole home speaks of it, — the spare room, the parlor kept for company; this little luxury, that little convenience; the well-stored, well-kept kitchen; the tools, the barns, the orchards, the meadows. With each year's increase some new necessity or charm or luxury is added. Books are bought, improvements adopted, the house repaired, daughters sent to school and sons to college, and a thousand things accomplished, impossible to so small an income but for the native, the home-bred thrift. Go where you will, and all over New England, written in indelible letters, is the word *thrift*. The European reads it with surprise, as he contrasts the homes of the laboring population of this young country with what he has been wont to see, and the Southern believer in slavery almost forgets his faith as, all up and down this bleak and sterile region, he sees engraved a word he searches for in vain under his own more genial sky and patriarchal system. For what it does out of the home, see where great cities have risen within our own memories, whose busy looms dispute already the markets of the world; see whole States rising to power and opulence and character; on every sea behold swift ships bear-

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ing away the palm, and in remotest corners, wherever man has trod, some token of the New England thrift. The barefoot boy, outgrowing his country home, becomes the merchant prince, a man of character as well as wealth; and the hungry, runaway apprentice *sits* in the presence of kings, and wrests the lightnings from heaven and the sceptre from tyrants. It is no mean quality that does all this, that really bears the burden of the nation and makes its success and glory, that strides on ever to more and more signal conquests, while they who sneer dwindle daily. Better the thrift of honorable personal endeavor than all the gold of old family hoarding, or that which comes of the woes and wrongs of the enslaved.

Our New England homes must see to it that they do not part with this characteristic. It has its rise and growth in them, and when we shall learn to despise economy, reject the wholesome maxims and restraints by which our fathers throve, when we shall fling ourselves into the vortex of display, then we shall lose one of the truest features of our lineage, and, stepping into the vulgar contentions of vulgar life, let ourselves down from the vantage-ground we now possess. Never be ashamed of your New England thrift, but let it be your glory; never from your homes banish its precept and its practice. Controlled by principle, it cannot degenerate into meanness.

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while it will make the home smile for you and for your children, and will add for all a charm, solid and real. For a moment recall the home of the shiftless; think of the blight such a home is upon young hearts and hopes; think of the homes of the extravagant and spendthrift, and for what they are preparing their children, then turn to your own, and resolve that, though men may scoff and condemn, for you the law of home shall be prudence, economy, thrift!

I can enumerate but a single other characteristic of the New England home, *hospitality*. It has been somewhat the fashion to deny this virtue to the New-Englander. I have heard men from the South and West abuse the East for its niggardly inhospitality; and if there were no other forms of hospitality than their own, they might be right. But hospitality must always vary in its expression with the position, the character, the advantages, of the individual or race. The hospitality of the African negress to the traveller, which has passed into the songs of our nursery, is none the less genuine than that of the Southern planter, who, with every thing combining to make the entertainment of stranger or friend easy and delightful, has been accepted, this side of the Atlantic, as the true type of hospitality, fascinating our Northern participants in it, and adding their voice to the hue and cry which sets against their own section. The fact is,

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hospitality is a thing of the heart, not to be gauged by demonstration so much as by sentiment, and I thoroughly believe that in no portion of the earth is the sentiment more deeply planted or more widely diffused. The New-Englander is apt to be a man of narrow income. The whole method of his living has to be regulated by strictest economy. He must watch and stop the little leaks, so he cannot afford that off-hand and lavish outlay of time and money which his heart prompts, and which, after all, makes up the *seeming* superiority of a Southern hospitality. He has no slaves to do his bidding, no countless acres to supply his table, no stores of horses for his guests, but he has all the heart and will; and though his natural reserve, his want of personal grace, — which is so large a charm in the residents of a warmer climate, — may not make his greeting quite so impressive, or his expressions of interest so frequent, or his acts so many, yet he has none the less a hearty desire to do the best he can *within his limits*. I insist that the New England heart is as large, its hospitalities as broad and deep and high, as any upon earth. If I were to complain of New-England hospitality at all, I should say that we do not take it easy enough. We do not leave our guests enough to themselves. Our hospitalities are too much a task; they cost us too much in time and anxiety and money, and, be-

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cause we think these essential, our native thrift sometimes demurs or forbids. These are mistakes in the methods of hospitality, but the root of the thing is in us. Where will you go in New England that you will not find it? At what door will you knock that it shall not welcome you? An hungered, weary, a stranger, or sick, unstinted kindliness will minister to your necessities. I have travelled much on foot through New England, much among the by-roads of our villages, and I never found any thing but the broadest welcome and the kindliest cheer, — rude, rough, coarse, perhaps, but hearty and true.

I found myself one winter's morning some twenty miles away from home. During the night there had come up one of those fiercely driving snow-storms, which now and then sweep along the coast, and lay their embargo upon all out-door movement. It was a pitiless morning, but I felt uneasy about my home, and I must go. Well wrapped in coat and shawl, and with a good heart, I started, only as I turned the first corner to find the shawl stripped from me and whirled into the air, and to see my hat, after some mad capers, plunged desperately into the river. The handkerchief that supplied its place soon became a useless mass of frozen snow and ice, and with a bare head I pursued my way, here fording, amid floating blocks of ice, a road over which the rebellious tide had

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made a breach, there lifting my sleigh bodily over a drift through which my mare could not drag it; now losing my balance and becoming actually buried beneath yielding masses of snow, and now encouraging the faithful beast, who never through all that day's terror for a moment faltered. Once from an opened door I heard a voice shout out that, under the circumstances, very aggravating reminder of the difficulty of the road to Jordan, and once in the moment of despair, like an apparition, some good Samaritan appeared with a shovel, and as silently disappeared. That was all my cheer. It was not of myself, however, that I meant to speak; and as I have never told to any the full story of that day, I should hardly begin here. Let me only say, that the night had set in bitterly cold; I had deserted my broken sleigh; I had been compelled to abandon the willing back of my mare, — *brown* when we started, but now from fore-top to fetlock unspotted *white*, — and through the darkness, through the drifts, with words of cheer was urging her weary limbs, that made a path for me. Without rest we had toiled nine weary hours, and made ten miles, when her better instinct brought our labor and exposure to a close. Seeing a barn not far from the road-side, she made directly for it, and no coaxing of mine could prevent. I felt that she was right, and I turned toward the house, and knocked, and asked

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shelter and food. I know that it was a strange apparition presented itself before that young girl, — with matted and frozen locks, hatless, shivering, probably the only mortal outside the house she had seen that day, — and I did not wonder that she ran. But the gray-haired father came, and bade me welcome, went to the barn and provided for my horse, made me a place at the kitchen fire, while the good wife brought out the mystery and wealth of home-made pie and cake, the welcome luxury of tea. Around the evening fire we sat and talked, — I a stranger, yet a friend within his gates, he a courteous, kindly, and well-pleased host; and the evening I had dreaded waned, and when the night hours came, I found the best chamber, with its spotless drapery and marvellous feather-bed, inviting my weary and aching body to its embrace. With the morrow rose the sun, and after breakfast the old man went with me to the woods where I had left my sleigh, dug it out, and tied it up, and showed me how he thought I could best reach home. What could I do? Words were little, money was less; and yet, so universally is man reduced to a contemptible money shift, that as I uttered the words of acknowledgment, involuntarily I put my hand upon my purse. He fixed his mild, gray eye upon me as he said, "*No sir; that would spoil it all.*" The act and the sentiment are type of that true

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spirit of hospitality which pervades New England, — not showy, or obtrusive, but delighting to minister of such as it has to the want of the stranger and the pleasure of the friend.

If now I were to be asked my ideal of a New England home, — which is my ideal of an earthly home, — I should answer somewhat thus ; — a house standing alone, roomy, convenient, that should convey, immediately and only, to the beholder the idea of home, not far from some thrifty New England village. About it should cluster all the means and appliances of the farm, above it droop the branches of the elm, before it spread meadow and orchard, and somewhere, not far, woods, waters, and hills. It should wear within in every appointment the aspect of home, — no show furniture, no show rooms, no waste decoration, no useless expense, but only such luxuries as should subserve the growth of heart and mind, with such accessories of comfort as should minister to ease without provoking sloth. Here I would have children of both sexes, including *the baby*, without which no household is complete. And the house should be for them as much as for me ; more for them than for any guests. With these children I would grow old, establishing between myself and them the fullest confidence, causing them to find in me their truest friend, and making home the dearest of all places, the sweetest of all

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words. It should be the centre of gentle but permanent influences, and from its daily converse and its evening fireside should go precept and example to mould the life and bless the memory. For its relaxation there should be amusements; for its mental culture, books; for its refinement, music and such works of art as could be afforded; for its higher nature, daily religion, and on the Sabbath that keeping of holy time which should not weary, while it led them into a deeper contemplation of the things of God than the routine and bustle of other days allow. Well-ordered, thrifty, and hospitable, such a home would combine all that man has a right to ask, all that is best of what God has to give. Such homes there have been, and by the blessing of God such homes shall ever be.

Leaving out that which to me is essential to the picture, but not essential to the fact, *the homestead*, what is there here impossible to any one? What is there essential to a true home that we may not all make? I insist upon it that we should think more of the *house* we live in. Even in the crowded, illy-built suburbs, of high rents and taxes, in which many of us are forced to live, there is a choice. A few dollars, too often foolishly begrudged, may make a vast difference in your doctor's bill and your children's character. Plague and cholera have been known to

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waste the shady side of the street, and spare that on which the sun shone. The home needs the sunshine for the body and the heart. If I could make my voice heard, I would proclaim in every New England village the folly of rushing toward a centre, of pinching men and children up in little pens near a main street, when God's great wide world is open, and there is room enough, near enough, for every necessity. Healthier would life be morally and physically could we break away from the absurdity of crowded villages, and spread out into the country which God made, where sun and air, pure as He creates them, could reach us. The house you live in should be such as will help you carry out the purposes of the family organization, and in no way hinder; the home you build within it should be a place of happiness, a nursery for the world and a training-ground for heaven; and there is no one of us but may make it these if we will.

Wherever you find man, you find his strongest instinct is his love for home. Take the Esquimaux from his blubber and his ice-hut to the luxury and splendor of the tropic, and he droops and dies; the Swiss peasant amid the gayety of the Parisian metropolis sickens at the thought of the wild mountain-air and the evening cry of the goats; and the New-Englander, cosmopolitan as he is, stifles the yearnings of

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his heart by surrounding himself with the things that remind him of his old home. In every language there are songs of home, touching the heart's deep deeps; and among them all one to us dearer than the rest, that seems a special inspiration, so exquisitely do the music and the words join hands to express what otherwise were inexpressible. Scarcely thirty years ago, a man of genius and of disappointment, child of a New England home, gave in his need to Charles Kemble, then manager of the theatre at Covent Garden, for the sum of thirty pounds, the manuscript of the opera of "Clari, or the Maid of Milan." As I remember it, it is mainly noticeable for its one lyric gem, the low, longing utterance of a weary and despondent exile. It made the fortune of every one prominently connected with it, except the author, who was not even complimented with a copy of his own song. It secured to Miss Tree, who first sang it, a wealthy husband; it filled the treasury of the theatre; within two years the publishers were estimated to have made $10,000 by it. Since then it has gone wherever the English tongue has gone, it is enshrined in every heart, its music and its words wake in each and all one sentiment, the first to live, the last to die. When the returning regiments — the wreck and remnant of that great Crimean struggle — marched in triumph through the streets of London, stepping to

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the martial strains of England's grand anthem, "God save the Queen," as the first rank wheeled beneath the gates of the Horse Guards, — the great head-quarters of the army, — the anthem died away, and slowly, sweetly, softly, and with an electric power that thrilled through every soldier heart, and called, unbidden, warrior tears, — arose the strains of "*Home, sweet, sweet Home!*" They were men who had faced death for months and years unmoved, and many of the quicker sensibilities had been blunted by familiarity with scenes of violence and blood, but there slumbered underneath, pure and strong and fervent, the love of home; and as those long-familiar notes fell on their ears, there amid old scenes and sympathetic faces, they were no longer war-worn veterans, proudly returning from hard-earned fields, but little children at the cottage-door, — the dear, far-off, long-left home! So is it with us, warriors on another field and in a sterner strife. Life's stirring duties and necessities, calling for the strong and stern in man, make us oblivious to, suspicious of, the finer sentiments, which proudly and foolishly we strive to crush. But in the pauses of the fight, in scenes of peril or success, in moments of victory and triumph, some stray, secret influence of the long past comes surging over us, — some well-remembered token of our own "sweet home," — and we are children again in that far by-

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gone of better days! Blessed be God for the halcyon days and the holy memories of home, — the best, the happiest spot on earth, — so bright, so happy, that, when we speak of that heavenly Father's mansion which lies before, we give it the selfsame name that the mansion lying behind us bears, — HOME!

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VIII.

THE LOST HOME.

AS WE grow up and become fitted for the activities of life, we separate from the old home of childhood. That is one of the things that must be left behind. The memory of it remains, rejoicing and refreshing the man of middle life, while his dream is that he will take his age back to the place where he was born and grew, and there

> "With wise and venerable cheerfulness,
> Hush down the stormy elements of strife,
> And rock his harassed being to repose," —

a dream, to most men, alas! impossible. I doubt if there be one more sanctifying influence than the recollections of a happy home, — which lie in that secret storehouse of experiences to which we more and more resort as we grow old, like those clouds out of which the storm has gone, which sometimes in a summer's afternoon lie along the Eastern horizon — soft,

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fleecy, glorified. They are solace in toil, shelter in danger, comfort in trial, blessing in age.

> "Thou holy, sacred name of home!
> Prime bliss of earth! Behind us and before
> Our guiding star, our refuge. A father's eye,
> A mother's smile, a sister's gentle love,
> The table and the altar and the hearth,
> In reverend image, keep their early hold
> Upon the heart." *

We may lose that home as a possession, but we keep it as a remembrance.

The Home is sometimes broken in other ways and lost. Misfortune, sin, death, invade it. Man in his mistake, God in his providence, shatters our hope, breaks up our plans, and sends us out from the outraged or the desolated hearth, wanderers and solitary and sad. Few are the thresholds not crossed in some such way, very few the homes continued to man from infancy to age without some bitter, utter change. Few are they who have not at some time, in some way, lost a home.

Too often it is with our homes as it is with our friends, we do not know their value till we lose them. As they slip from us they reveal the angel, and we lay hold upon their skirts to stay them, but we may

* My Dream of Life, by Henry Ware, Jr.

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not. Oh! the soul's deep yearning for the home that is lost! Oh! the darkness and misery of that spirit exiled from its Eden, kept from it by a mightier than he whose flaming sword forbade the returning steps of our first parents! There is no solitude like that of him who sits by the ashes of his own hearth; there is no agony like that of him, the echo of whose tread tells him that his is no longer *home*, for that is gone which made it so. There are words that may not be spoken, secrets not to be revealed, else would be unveiled sorrows such as have never seen the light, agonies that weary the night and make of solitude companionship. It must be in the orderings of Providence, that our homes be at some time desolate. "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

Yielding to the pressure of grief, and the nameless and numberless other trials which improve the opportunity to crowd and press and importune, the husband, the wife — the one who is left — hurries away from the old home, hopes to find solace in absence, and in some quicker way accomplish that which God always does in his own. I always want to beg that man, that woman, who is rushing out of the home into which God has come with his great teaching, to pause and see if it be not possible to keep that which now has a new holiness — consecrated before by joy,

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consecrated now by trial. Many have regretted, too late, the ready following of impulse or the urgency of friends, and the losing so of hallowing influences and communions which come in their full force only amid familiar things. Time may bring a new home again, other ties, other joys. It is right, it is proper, it is just that it should. Children demand care which only those in the place of parents can give. They ought not to be separated from home and the full home influence. The man, the woman, has years and energies and duties — capacities of giving and receiving — which are best developed, exercised in the home, by that new relationship so many affect to ridicule, so many say can only be because the old is forgotten. "The heart that has truly loved, never forgets." Let men respect other men's doings, though they cannot do so themselves. Let none fear in his own time and his own way, if his conscience so decree, to make a new home, in which to correct the mistakes he once made, in which to carry out to nobler issue the grand purposes of life. But let him stay by the old, broken home first; let him get just there the sweetness as the bitterness of God's discipline. By and by, as the yearning of a homesick child, will come the yearning for a home again — a home to supplement and complete not obliterate the first.

I have said this word because I have longed to say

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it and more, — to cast in my straw against a tide which sets strong, covertly if not openly, against a second home. I send this little volume to the world, in reverent memory of her who came to a broken home, and made it one again, and blessed it — who was as my father said, —

> "The idol of her happy home,
> Whose grateful inmates kneel and pray
> That heaven would bless for years to come, —
> Long years of bright, rejoicing life, —
> This honored mother, friend and wife."

Let me close with this earnest word: The great care should be so to live in the home that when it shall any way be lost, there shall be no accompanying sting of memory, harder to bear than any will of God. A little constant thought, self-denial, fidelity, a true life each with each, and each with God, will not only save all unavailing regret, and insure the purest peace under all experience, but make the thought of reunion and life again in the Home of God, chief among incentives to His service.

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